

4 Keys to Effective Ministry to Young People (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] Welcome everybody and great to see you here. I'm happy to speak up. Is that okay?! So welcome back to the second part of our session.

We're looking at four keys to effective ministry with young people.! As I did last week, we're going to start just with a very short Bible reading from Ephesians chapter 6 verses 1 to 4.

Last week we looked at Matthew and we saw Jesus welcoming children. Here we see Paul in his letter to the Ephesians giving instructions to children.

So the context is in the letter to the Ephesians, in the first half of the letter, he outlines God's plan for creation to sum up everything in Christ. And then in the second half of the letter, he applies it in terms of unity, in terms of ministry, in terms of what we would call morality, behaviour.

And then he gives some instructions to households. He talks to wives and husbands. And then in chapter 6 verse 1, he addresses children and he says this, Children, obey your parents of the law, for this is right.

[1 : 20] Honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children.

Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. And then he goes on to address slaves. So what Paul is doing here is showing the gospel applies to every sphere of life, to marriage, to parenting, and also to, loosely speaking, work.

He addresses slaves. But the point I really want to make here is that notice that he addresses children. Now, we know that the New Testament letters were read out to congregations.

The fact that he's addressing children seems to be that he expects children to be present as the letter is read. And as he's writing the letter, he addresses children as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He doesn't ignore them, but they're actually included in the household table. And as Paul does in each of the pairs, wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters, he addresses the apparently inferior party first, women and then children and then slaves.

[2 : 40] So that's even a greater maybe area of honour. And he provides children that they express their discipleship to Jesus, primarily in their relationship to their parents.

Their responsibility is to obey their parents. And that will be one way that children will express their discipleship to the Lord. And obviously there are other ways as well, but this is the way that he signals out.

And Paul backs this up by referring to the Ten Commandments and the commandment to honour your father and mother with that promise that it may go well. And then he addresses fathers, which is also quite interesting.

So he seems to be expecting that fathers will be playing a significant role in bringing up children. And he tells them not to exasperate their children, not to annoy or unnecessarily put demands on them, I guess, with the part of the thinking of that.

But instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. And then he points to the responsibility of the parents with respect to children. And we'll talk a little bit more about that later.

[3 : 53] So this is one of the passages in the Bible that is important in terms of thinking about children and youth ministry. It shows that for Paul, children are disciples of the church now.

And they can be addressed as such. They have a sphere of responsibility, of discipleship to live out. And they can be addressed as, as I say, disciples of Christ and urged to follow as their parents are

as well.

So this is just a, you know, just a little tidy window. Same thing happens, of course, in the letters of the Colossians. So this is not just a one-off. And occasionally we get mentions of children through the scriptures in Acts.

This promise is for you and for your children, the promise of the gospel. So they're not numerous references, but they are significant when they turn up. And this is certainly one of the significant references in Paul's letter, as we think about it.

So, again, just to emphasize, as we said last week, what you're doing is important. You're working with disciples of Christ. Children's ministers are not glorified babysitters, as we said last week, kind of holding children in a holding pattern.

[5 : 14] I was on a seminar during the week, and a guy was reporting a quote from a writer. I think it was the second century. I think it might have been the apostolic constitution, and it doesn't matter what it was.

But there was an instruction to the church to keep children quiet. So right through the very beginning of Christianity, children have been seen as a problem to be dealt with, rather than as disciples.

So it's very interesting just to hear this little bit of historical data, that even back in the second century, the idea was that children should be seen and not heard. So I guess that the adults can get on with the real business of discipleship.

But Paul, slightly different. He's addressing them. They're in the congregation. I'm assuming they were quiet, maybe. Who knows? We know children aren't always. But there it is.

And they're part of what we're doing, and what you're doing is really important there. So I'm going to pray, and then what we're going to do is, there's a couple of questions. We'll think about those, and then we'll move on to the final two of our keys for effective ministry.

[6 : 26] So let's pray. Father, thank you for gathering us here today. Thank you for the responsibility that you've given us in working with children and with youth.

Father, we thank you that you see all people as precious in your sight, and all that you call into your kingdom have a place in your kingdom and in the congregations, and you call them into it as well.

Thank you for Paul and his concern for children. He's thinking about how they express their discipleship. And Father, we pray now as we turn our attention to the various ministries, that once again, you will help us to be reminded of things that we already know, to do new things, and to maybe gather resources and ideas to equip us better, to do what we want to do, that is to lead children and youth into flourishing, into satisfying relationships with you, and living out their discipleship in very practical ways, in which we meet and we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, now there were some questions from last week. First one was a question just about pre-written materials and resources for youth groups. And I'm going to suggest, if you want to have a look at the website, youthworks.net resources, this is for youth and for children.

And what you'll find there is a whole series of resources that you can download. There are newsletters topically arranged. They're free.

[8 : 03] But there are also some resources that you can purchase. And particularly, I noticed on one page, there are a whole series of pre-written Bible studies for youth groups on books of the Bible.

Some are topical. But that will be a place to go. But in terms of resources to back up some of the things we've been talking about in this seminar and extend, if you, when you go to the page, I think it's either newsletters or something, you'll find it.

But there's a whole stack of it. They're arranged under youth, under children. There's another category called SRE, which you can feel free to ignore because that's very peculiar to Australia. We have a thing called special religious education, where we're entitled to go into the public schools and teach scripture once a week.

So [youthworks](http://youthworks.net) is responsible for that and supplies resources. But there are a whole bunch of things on tips for leaders, tips for thinking about all the things that we've been talking about and other things beside.

Then the other site I just want to draw your attention to, and you may already know this one too perhaps, is called Max 7. And that is a, basically it's a clearinghouse for children's ministry.

[9 : 19] So you need to be a little bit careful because lots of people can upload material, but it's all free. It's materials, ideas, worksheets, all sorts of stuff for children's ministry.

Videos, which have been uploaded, and they're all free and available for you to download and use. I haven't looked at it in a lot of detail. I know the guy who runs it, and he is an absolute genius. He's a guy that does puppet ministry to children, and he's absolutely brilliant. And it's an organisation called Wodless World, and they're running lots of different children's programs all around the world.

You can see that on the website as well. But as I say, just for children's ministry resources, there is a whole bunch of stuff there that you can have a look at. It's searchable by Bible book, by passage, by character, by theme, and stuff like this.

So it's not a bad site to use. But between those two, that would be a good place to start. And as I say, the YouthWorks one has stuff for children and youth, free resources in the form of newsletters and small, very short articles thinking about specific points, but also longer books and, as I say, studies and things like that.

[10:38] So that would be a good place to start, I think. They're ones that I know. Secondly, there are a couple of questions about evangelism. Evangelism in a youth group.

And so let me just... Yeah. Ideas for evangelism for a youth group, particularly getting unchurched people along.

Yeah. Well, this is kind of an interesting one. When I was running a youth group many, many years ago, and this is still a pattern in Sydney, we would do special invite nights.

And so we would have our normal program. And then we would do an invitation night. And that was usually a variation from our program. And it would be often off the site.

I think... I mean, your church already knows about this, because the evangelism event you ran a little while ago, you deliberately did off-site, so that people don't have to come into a church in order to encounter the gospel.

[11:39] You're kind of leading them on so-called neutral territory. If you invite people into the church, some people feel like they're coming onto an enemy territory, you know what I mean? And there can be just a barrier.

So we used to do all sorts of things, which were basically activity-based. But it's clear that at some point during the night, there'd be an explanation of the gospel. We always made a point of never inviting people along to an evangelistic event, unless they knew that it was an evangelistic event. Otherwise, it's a classic kind of... We call it bait and switch, you know, where you invite someone for one thing and suddenly they find they're doing another. That can... It's not a good... It's not transparent.

We need to make sure that we help people understand what's going on. But, yeah, we did... And, again, I'm hesitant to recommend stuff here because you will know your youth better than I do.

I mean, last night I was asked a question about TikTok gaming and something else that I have nothing... No knowledge of. You know, young people today like doing all sorts of things.

[12:42] Back in our day, we used to... We would go to a movie. We would try and make the activities relational. Movies aren't great because they're not relational. Basically, everyone's sitting in a dark theatre watching something.

It's not engaging. So we would often run game nights. I remember one thing we did once was we took everyone into the middle of Sydney and we did a scavenger hunt.

And so we sent people out with a list of 10 things they had to find in groups so that it was kind of safety and each group had a leader. We didn't send the kids off on their own. But then they had to find things.

You can do fun things like that with a phone now. Because you record the thing on your phone. You've got 10 things or 10 things, activities you have to do. And then you meet back at the end. Another thing we did, again, we used the city.

We had a... We called it an inner city on the things. And so you had to go to a really long elevator and run up it the wrong way. You know, just kind of things like that.

[13:44] And kids love doing those kind of stuff. Or ours do. I wouldn't be... I wouldn't be doing anything involving screens and gaming and stuff like that because, again, they're kind of individual activities.

I know people game with other people on other screens. But that's a little bit like saying, you know, you've had a meeting on Zoom and you really got to know each other. You kind of didn't, you know, because there's screens and stuff like that.

So... But... One of the recommendations I hear people making these days at screens is to get young people out into nature. And it feels like you've got nature in spades around here, though it is quite warm.

But bushwalks, where there's a long time just for people to meet and talk, those kind of things may or may not work. I don't know how that goes with the weather and people like being inside.

The other thing to think about, also, is if your youth group feels small, sometimes size can be a barrier to an invitation where people...

[14:51] Because when a new person comes in, they're immediately noticeable. And so perhaps if there are other youth groups around, you can collaborate on an event just to get a little bit more of a critical mass of people so that when a new person comes in, they're part of a group rather than a small group so they don't quite stand out.

So just a few ideas. But as I say, you will know your people and your culture better than I. But we would also go to the beach.

Australians love going to the beach. You can play beach volleyball. You can run up and down. You can swim. You can play with the sharks. There's all sorts of things that you can do. And so we would also do that as well.

Encouraging a passive group to invite people to the group. Probably similar kind of principles. If people are going to come... Sorry.

If people are reticent to invite people to the youth group, I guess my first question would be, is there anything we can do that will make you feel more comfortable in inviting people to the group?

[16:02] Just a little bit of research and investigation into that. So if you have a group and they're reluctant to invite, why is that? And for young people, it's usually something to do with embarrassment.

They don't want to look bad in front of their friends by inviting them to something which is kind of boring or who knows what. And so it's just worth maybe improving that a little bit and trying to create an atmosphere, which I know you do anyway, of safety, where it is safe to invite people.

And you know there's not going to be an embarrassment or a risk. The kid's not going to lose space in front of his or her friends that they can do that. And again, sometimes the collaborative idea, if it's possible, I'm sure it is, where I live in Sydney, we live in the inner city and there's a lot of little small youth groups.

And so what they do is once every six weeks, they combine four or five youth groups. They meet in a single church. So instead of having five groups of anywhere between eight to 15, suddenly you've got a group of 55 or 60.

And it just provides that more anonymous space where people are able to invite. And sometimes, and often with a critical mass like that, you can put on a different kind of event just with more people, people organisation and things like that to go.

[17:34] The other thing is just simply keep encouraging people about the teaching of the gospel. that the gospel encourages us to be hospitable and to invite and to share.

And so we never want to underestimate the value of teaching people about the gospel and allowing God to transform people through the power of his word into doing that.

And that's a long, slow process. Usually, sometimes, you know, people, the light flicks on fairly quickly, depending on to the personality of the youth group people as well.

But just that slow, patient teaching about the grace of God, the mercy of God, the welcome he's given us. Why would you want that for your friends? And put that in the context of a program where you're being thoughtful about young people.

You know, and then the final option is, of course, just the one-to-one conversation with people just to say, you know, have you put someone in mind?

[18:41] Are you praying for someone? And have that conversation to encourage people to invite. So just a couple of ideas, and I'm pretty sure you probably thought along those lines.

Sometimes you've just got to keep sticking at it, you know, until it happens. Now, the final question was from last week, where I gave the example of my daughter trying to encourage her son to serve her, his sister, right?

Got all that. So Sonny is two and a half years old, and he can make his sister laugh. And so they're encouraging him to serve his sister by making her laugh. And someone was kind of thinking about that, and saying, kind of, was that accidental?

Surely, yep, absolutely. It was accidental. But also what they're trying to do is just encourage him to be other person-centred. We know that children are very self-centred all the way through, till they're about aching.

Yeah, that never kind of goes away. But it's much clearer in children. We can hide it a lot better. And so we need to be trained to encourage to think of others before ourselves.

[20 : 01] And that morphed into a question about the priority of the head and the hand and the heart. I think I made another comment last week that teaching is a very key component of what we're doing with young children.

And perhaps a reasonable goal for children's ministry particularly is just simply knowledge of the Bible stories so that theology can come a little bit later.

Now, the reason I was suggesting that is because of developmental psychology, where young children are quite concrete in their understanding. and so they need concrete kind of images and pictures and stories on which eventually to build abstract concepts.

So we could talk about sin as being, you know, estrangement from God or rebellion against God. That's kind of conceptual.

But we can talk about people who turn their back on God physically as a concrete way of showing that.

[21 : 08] When your mum asks you to do something and you don't do it, that's kind of like, you know, between us and God, generally God is asking us, telling us to do things and we don't want to do it.

Trying to give concrete examples. And when we move into theology, there is lots of abstract thinking. But the theology of the Bible is built on the narratives.

And so if you don't know the scriptures, it's very hard to do the theology. So we think developmentally through the place and help young people to know that.

And the question was, is it therefore all about the head? What about the hands and heart? What about love for God? What about serving in God's name? And I think that's an excellent question because then the whoever asked it also went on to talk about their own experience of learning where it was, I think they were in a college context where they learnt a lot in terms of the head first and then they felt the hand and the heart came later.

And this is a real challenge for any formal process of education because we're very strong on information but how do we move to transformation?

[22 : 23] So a couple of comments about that. First thing is don't underestimate the power of the information in the Christian gospel. Again, it is the gospel of Jesus, the message of God, which is good news.

It's a report. It is information. But that is also the message that does the transformation in the power of the spirit. So we can directly address the heart and we can skill the hands.

But to hear the good news that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, a report, ought to prompt from us gratitude. And there is an emotional reaction straight away to that.

We don't just receive that as, oh yeah, that was on the front page of the paper yesterday. That message prompts the love of God in our hearts, again, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So I think more is happening when we're teaching the scriptures than simply the transference of information. We may feel we're doing that, but the spirit is at work and we'll be bringing about that transformation in affections and other things along the way.

[23 : 38] That said, it also doesn't hurt to point to the emotional reactions or the heart reactions that you have. And this leads into another really important area of teaching.

It's not only what you teach, it's the model that you are giving while you teach. So Paul urges church leaders to watch their life and doctrine closely.

They teach doctrine, but they live doctrine in their life as well. And so this is why character is so important in leaders, because you are really, and this applies to anyone who's a teacher, in fact, anyone who's a Christian, you are a sermon in shoes.

Okay? So as soon as people know you're a Christian, they are reading your sermon, your next door neighbours, they know you go to this church.

Every time you speak to them and or interact, you're a sermon in shoes of what it means to be a Christian person as a leader in whatever area of children's and youth ministry or church ministry.

[24 : 50] you are being read or listened to as a sermon, not only what you teach, but in the way that you live and react and respond. And you can model the heartfelt response in the way you pray, in the way you speak about God, in the incidental comments you make about your gratitude to God, whatever it might be, your desire to please God.

all of these things that a normal part of, excuse me, our Christian experience are part of my, the heart response that's there.

When it comes to the hand and skills, then I think that is an age and stage related area. And I've said, and we'll talk a little bit about this again, getting children involved in church and doing things, that, that, that, that, then we come down to training in, in kind of skills.

And, and that needs to be just appropriate to the level that's there. But, I don't think, I don't think the, the, the, the priority has to go, what is it, head, heart, hand.

We can walk into government at the same time as, as the American president once said. In other words, all three things happen at once. But, Paul also does say, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[26 : 18] And, and so there is a priority on, on teaching the gospel and getting those things that come out. It's quite a long answer, but I think that's a really important question. Because it also goes to the heart of our teaching, where, it would be, it would be good, but not great, if our children graduated from our children's ministries, knowing the Bible really well, but, not with a, not with a, not with a great, in love for God and a desire to serve, but those, head, hand and heart, are the goals of all our ministries.

So we, we try to think about those elements as we go through. So perhaps, we can pick up that at the end if you want to go back. But, excellent questions and I hope there's something helpful in the answers there.

Thank you. What's it? No. There we go. So, last week, I, I think you've got the, um, diagram on your page.

Uh, we talked about how, uh, children's union ministry is gospel-centered. Uh, it's about God, it's about His Son, Jesus, first of all. Uh, it's about, um, helping people to, uh, come to know the Lord and to grow in Him and is discipleship-focused.

Uh, we aim at making, disciple, making disciples, uh, and helping them on that pathway of discipleship that we're all, uh, which, uh, keeps, uh, going.

[27 : 46] Today, we're going to talk, uh, a little bit about, uh, intergenerational and loving ministry and, uh, and a couple of other, uh, and areas that are associated, uh, with them.

So, let's, uh, think about, uh, intergenerational ministry, first. Uh, this may or may not be a new term to you, I don't know, uh, but, uh, generations just simply refer to kind of different age groups.

So, in every church, there are different generations. Uh, you've got your children and your young people, uh, your, um, you know, middle-aged students, young married, and then kind of the whole people.

Sometimes these have names, Gen X, Gen Y, boomers, I don't know if they're labels in, uh, in the Malaysian context. Uh, and people often talk about intergenerational warfare.

So, everyone hates boomers, you know, uh, because they're the ones that made all the money in post-World War II. Uh, no one understands Gen Z, you know, because they're the young people that were born of iPhones and what are they doing and all that kind of stuff.

[28 : 52] So, uh, it's interesting in my family, uh, my youngest daughter is 22, uh, and, uh, she was of a generation in Australia that went to high school with an iPhone.

Uh, and, uh, so I think she's caught a millennial, I'm not quite sure, it doesn't matter, but her sisters don't understand her and they're only seven years apart, uh, in terms of generation. It's very interesting to watch them.

What's all, what's all this got to do well? A lot of churches are multi-generational. That is, they have the generations coming to church, but are they intergenerational in that the generations are ministering to one another?

So, uh, one of the, the classic pictures of church maybe a, a long time ago was a family would hop in the car and drive to church. Uh, the dad would say, we're going to church together.

They would get in the car park and then they would get out and the mum and dad would go into the main building for the service. The youth group would go off to the hall and the children would go off to the Sunday school and then an hour later they would all get back in the car and say, wasn't it

great going to church together?

[29 : 59] Uh, when they actually did. They went to three different churches. They went to the youth church, the adult church and the children's church and, and they didn't mingle or mix, uh, much at all.

Intergenerational ministry is a, uh, an idea where people are trying now to think about how can we, um, maximize what appears to be the picture in the Bible that is of the generations mingling and ministering to one another and learning from one another.

So, as we did last week, uh, some common ideas. Ministry to young people, uh, is all about young people. Uh, these are ideas that we're just going to critique a little bit.

Uh, ministry to young people is all that young people need. So, uh, so that's young people relating to young people. So, when you, uh, creating a youth group, uh, you just get young people to minister to young people and, uh, and that's what you need and then, uh, if you've got a Sunday school, uh, then, uh, the younger the better.

So, we try to, so the idea is to try and get people together in the same bracket or age group. And then the third thought is that young people aren't old enough to participate in church. And remember, I'm using young people here because I'm aware that we've got children and youth, uh, minister, they can, uh, people here.

[31 : 19] So, let's think about, uh, intergenerational ministry to young people and, uh, what the Bible might say. And the first point to make is that, um, uh, the, the family and the household are actually the first church, uh, for the child.

Um, when we look at, uh, particularly Deuteronomy, uh, chapter 6, uh, verses 4 to 9, uh, we get the picture and it's a picture from ancient Israel of the parent and the child working side by side and the child asking questions about the faith.

What is this for? What is that for? And the, and the parent, uh, answering and, uh, doing it. Uh, Proverbs talks about the responsibility of parents to children and we've seen that, uh, passage in Ephesians 6 as well where, uh, Paul puts the responsibility first of all on father he doesn't say youth leaders, uh, bring up the children or don't say children's workers.

He says, uh, fathers don't exasperate your children and, uh, effective discipleship occurs firstly, uh, in the home. Uh, the, uh, the parents, uh, the, the, the primary, uh, spiritual caregivers, uh, in a, uh, Christian home and, and time and time again, uh, we've done surveys in Australia.

I don't know if you've done them here, in Malaysia, where we ask people, who is the major influence on your Christian life and experience? And, and parents are consistently, uh, number one.

[32 : 58] Uh, everyone expects people to say they're a youth leader, you know, the cool guy in jeans or the cool girl or whatever, but they consistently say parents. And the other, this may or may not surprise you, but grandparents often figure quite high as well.

And there's a, uh, a real ministry of grandparents to the next, you know, skipping the generation that comes, uh, as, uh, as there. So, some of the implications of that, uh, um, that the, uh, the, the responsibility of the church at large and perhaps you in your ministries is to, uh, to think about how to engage with parents and encourage them and partner with them in the bringing up of their children.

So, um, if you're a youth leader or a children's ministry leader, you are not responsible for the spiritual nurture of the children. You are responsible for partnering with their parents in their nurture. So, it's a, just a slightly different paradigm. Um, and, uh, we'll, um, maybe, uh, explore that a little bit later. But one of the implications will be, uh, clear communication between the ministry and the home.

So, when the, uh, when the children or the youth or the youth at the various programs, do the parents know anything about it? Now, you might say, well, the parents don't care.

[34 : 25] They just want the kids off their, you know, off the thing. But, uh, but maybe part of your ministry to parents is helping them to care. And, uh, churches kind of think of a number of different ways of, uh, thinking about that.

But the, uh, the family, as I say, is the, uh, first church, uh, that's there. Secondly, we have a, uh, church household.

And so, the saying here is, uh, for many, uh, uh, many children and people, the church is the second family. Okay? So, if the family is the first church, sometimes, uh, or often, the church will be the second family.

Uh, and, uh, that will especially apply to, uh, children and youth who come from under-leaving households. They will find, uh, another family, not a, not a, not a replacement family, but another family in the family of the household of families.

But, uh, that the church household, of course, is, um, the God-ordained means, he calls us into communities called congregations or churches where, uh, we can, uh, be nurtured, have fellowship, uh, practice the fruits of the spirit with one another, uh, be instructed in the Christian faith, teach one another Christian faith, uh, and live together as the community of God's people.

[35 : 47] Uh, and, and that is the, the nurturing ground for our discipleship. Uh, it's there. Uh, we are built up in the church as we build one another up, uh, Ephesians 4 tells us.

And so, uh, the family and the church are both essential, um, environments for the, um, the raising of Christian disciples, uh, young people and, uh, and old.

Now, the feature of that church and the family is, uh, the idea of unity and diversity. So, when you look around your church congregation, uh, you should be struck or hopefully you'll be struck first of all by your unity.

Okay? And it's a unity which is given to us. Uh, our, our responsibility is to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. As soon as you become a Christian, you're brought into unity with other believers whether you feel like it or know it or not and you need to explore how that unity works out.

But it's a unity that is in diversity. We are all different. We are not the same. And that is actually God's good plan. Uh, that, um, we have different gifts.

[36 : 58] Uh, and here we're thinking of course of, uh, 1 Corinthians, uh, 12 and 14 where God has, uh, given, uh, many different gifts, many different kinds of people.

Uh, no one has all the gifts and no one has no gift. Everyone has a contribution to make. And, uh, you know the teaching that Paul goes on. You should not despise people who don't have your gift. The ear can't save the eye. You don't belong to the body. Uh, and even the, the weaker parts are on it, Paul says, that are there. And all of this is for mutual edification, mutual building up in the faith. God has arranged, uh, unity and diversity, different people with different strengths and different weaknesses. Uh, no person is self-sufficient as a Christian believer.

We are all dependent on one another. Uh, and that is exactly the way God has planned it because it promotes humility but it also promotes service and a whole bunch of stuff that comes.

[38 : 00] So, in terms of thinking about, um, the family, the church and then, uh, the way that we can minister in the body with our different gifts, let's think of, uh, three points of application.

So, engaging young people, uh, means, uh, engaging their whole household. Okay. So, we've already started, uh, talking, uh, a little bit about that.

But, uh, effective discipleship, uh, uh, can, will be enhanced, uh, when we encourage, uh, families and, uh, equip families and resource families to be able to, oops, sorry, I think I skipped a bit.

Yeah, that's right. Uh, to, um, uh, to be, uh, to be the primary disciple makers of their children. It was very interesting in, uh, in Sydney, uh, when, uh, COVID hit, uh, I don't, I'm not sure what you did, but, uh, we had to stop coming to church, um, and, uh, and people introduced to the church on Zoom.

Uh, that immediately, uh, posed a problem for parents because suddenly they had kids in their home and they weren't able to send them off to Sunday school. And, uh, we, we found, uh, a lot of people really struggled at this point because they weren't quite sure what to do with their children because they were so used to sending them off for, uh, and outsourcing.

[39 : 26] and that's not a problem. But it also showed that, uh, perhaps, um, as churches, uh, we had professionalized, uh, the discipleship of young children.

In other words, we'll do it for you and taken that responsibility away from parents. They were happy to give it. But when push came to shove in COVID, suddenly they were at a bit of a loss as to, well, what do I do?

I've got the kids. How do I bring them up? Uh, what, what, what should I say? What should I do?

Those kind of things. And, uh, and so we had to flip to providing a, a whole bunch of, uh, resources in order to, uh, equip parents to disciple their children at home over the, the two years or so of COVID.

It was a very interesting kind of moment, uh, that was there. And, um, uh, it's, I'm not saying it's easy because the fact that you do such a good job means that parents can relax.

Right? Because they, they, you can think, okay, job done. Uh, and sometimes in Australia, you know, it happens in Malaysia. Some people just send their kids along to Sunday school and don't go to church because child binding for an hour or so and, uh, that's my religious responsibility out of the road.

[40 : 40] Uh, but how can we, uh, help to engage, um, uh, parents and households in bringing up their children? Now, there is a developmental thing that goes on through here as well.

Uh, it is more effective, uh, again, from our experience, uh, with younger children, as your children get older and move into the teenage years, they want to be a little more independent of the family. and so the relationship has to shift and change. But, uh, but, but as parents, uh, we're thinking about how do we bring up our children, as Paul said in Ephesians, in the nurture and fear of the Lord?

What does that look like? Uh, and, uh, there's a whole bunch of ideas, uh, about that, uh, that we can talk about. Not the least, just simply reading the Bible to your children at night. That was one of our main strategies and praying at the dinner table.

Uh, we, and having meals together, we, uh, we made that, uh, a key point for the, as long as we had our children at home, uh, we would, uh, try and have a meal together every night, uh, pray together around the table and then I, uh, myself and Sue, uh, would spend time reading, uh, the scriptures and other books, uh, before they went to bed.

[41 : 55] Now, there was a whole bunch of other things, but they were kind of our, our building blocks. Those were the two things that we really made a priority. It got harder as the girls got older, uh, and at that point we began to rely more on the church as a second family than to get them into a youth group where they can be looked down.

But, um, the, um, the Catholics say you've got the child till they're seven, uh, and, uh, they're the most important form in years. And, uh, you've got the children in your home till they're seven years old.

Don't waste that time. You know, uh, now it doesn't mean you have to kind of count the Christian faith into them or anything like that, but, uh, you'll never have more influence, uh, over children than before they go to school.

And suddenly there's teachers and peers and all sorts of things happening. Uh, and so to just talk to parents, uh, about that and to equip them with ways to, uh, to do this is, uh, a thing to think about. Uh, second point is, uh, young people need the church as we all need the church and the church needs young people. It's a mutual thing because of the diversity which God has given.

[43 : 03] Uh, and so how can we think of ways to integrate young people into the church body and, uh, help them to do that? At the very least, uh, supplying a, uh, a children's ministry and a youth ministry is one way of kind of integrating into that.

But, uh, again, that can often be separate integration if you know what I mean. It's a program that you're putting on. Uh, are there ways that, uh, that we can think about in order to, um, uh, help young people to feel part of the church.

I know the interesting, uh, things, um, I saw, uh, again, a little bit of research about this in some churches of darkness, um, that, uh, think of the church as a village, uh, where hopefully everyone knows each other now and it gets harder to be at the congregation problems.

But, uh, one of the goals we set ourselves with a children's ministry was for each child in the ministry to be known by name, by five adults. Okay?

Uh, so, uh, and so, well, all that would simply mean when I would walk in I would say hi to Louise, to John, to Fred, and to Joe and I was an older person that knew their name.

[44 : 20] And sometimes hello was all it was, sometimes it was hi, how was school this week? Just trying to say you are known by more than just the kids in your group. Uh, I think the Americans got a formula they say seven to one.

we felt that was a little ambitious. But, uh, but five to one, uh, was kind of where we were hoping where we'd encourage people just to get to know the names of young people, not, not their parents, but outside the family.

In other words, the church family to know. Uh, and depending on how many children and how many adults, that's quite doable. Uh, and just, just one tiny little thing to say that you, uh, needed and welcome to church because we know you were known.

And then, uh, beyond that, uh, churches experiment with children participating in the service, uh, sometimes leading prayers, uh, with their parents, uh, alongside, or sometimes on their own. Uh, when we do the Lord's Supper, I think I mentioned this last week, in our church, uh, we have a kind of a call and response where one of the children will be a, we're basically on the Passover model where they ask this pastor, what is the meaning of this bread?

[45 : 31] What is the meaning of this wine? Why are we doing this? And so children see children participating. Uh, and then we also have the practice where children can participate in the Lord's Supper.

Um, and I know that's, that could be controversial. I'm not sure what the practice is in your church. Um, but, uh, so that's, you know, that's something pretty important in terms of the context of the sacramental life of the church and, uh, and children can participate in, uh, to the extent that, uh, you feel comfortable theologically and all the rest.

Um, perhaps lots of other ways but the principle is to try and help people to see that they can participate in, uh, the activities of the church at an age and stage and appropriate level.

Uh, not asking anyone to become an elder in the church if they're five or anything like that. That's, that just doesn't make any sense. But, uh, are there ways of helping, uh, helping, help, can you help clean up?

Uh, yeah, why should it be the same few? Maybe some young people could be invited onto various rosters to have a role of serving in the church because service, of course, is a way to get involved.

[46 : 45] So, and the idea, as I say, is to, um, is to maximise, uh, movement between the, uh, generations where, um, not only, uh, teachers teaching children, but, uh, older people unmodelling the Christian faith.

Uh, I remember one of the, the outstanding nights at, uh, our youth group when I was, uh, too long ago to remember now, but, um, we invited, uh, a member of the congregation to come and speak to the youth group.

Uh, he was 85, five years old, you know, and he'd become a Christian when he was three. And so, the attraction was, he's a person who's been a Christian for 82 years.

Uh, and we were 18 and 19 and couldn't conceive, that was mind-blowing, that someone had been a Christian for 82 years. And, uh, and it was a Q&A.; Uh, we got to ask him, um, you know, what was it like?

Uh, how did, how do you, how did you hang in there that long? And what happened? And the thing that he said that really struck us, uh, many of us at the time, uh, we said, um, uh, okay, you've been a Christian for 82 years now, you must be pretty close to being perfect, you know, sanctification and all that.

[47 : 57] And he said, uh, no, I actually realise now I'm more sinful than I did 50 years ago. And that was my bloodline again. You're just thinking like, and that was a, that was a lesson to us in Christian maturity.

Uh, that, um, you know, he understood the grace of God, but he also then understood the depth of his sin, the older he'd got. And, uh, to, uh, as I say, a bunch of, you know, 18 and 19 year olds.

I remember the night, uh, we were a pretty rowdy group. You could have heard a pin drop. You listen to every word this guy said. Uh, you know, he was a venerable saint, 80 years a Christian and, uh, and telling us all these things, uh, he was just extraordinary.

And, uh, and the, the, the pushback of that was the next week, of course, a whole bunch of us would, we could go up to him and say, hi, John, how are you? And, and we could, we could, you know, talk to him in church because the ice had been broken.

And so then that developed into a little program we call, uh, meet a moldy oldie. What we suggested was that, uh, everyone in the youth group adopt an old person and, uh, and gather and form a relationship and, and try and encourage them, you know, so to, to promote that intergenerationality.

[49 : 14] Uh, because the other thing we found was we, we tried to do something similar at the church I'm at at the moment, uh, to encourage, uh, young people and old, uh, and older people to have a kind of a, you know, a friend mentoring relationship.

Uh, older people felt they were useless and they were, and they were scared of young people, uh, even, and the young people thought the older people were too, too old and terrifying to approach.

So it was kind of like, uh, we'd call it an exigent standoff, you know. Both, both, both groups wanted to kind of think about how to do this relationship but for various reasons they couldn't do it.

So we were trying to encourage our young people to take the initiative. Someone needs to take the initiative and to do that. And so that, the name of that program, Meet a Maldi Oldie, is kind of fun. Uh, and, uh, it, it was a bit of a joke in the congregation. That's the way Australian congregations work. We thought it was, you know, everyone thought it was cute and, and it immediately cut the ice out. And I want to be a Maldi Oldie, you know, in Australia.

[50 : 13] And, uh, and people say, I want to meet a Maldi Oldie and it worked, uh, you know, and got, got a little more misy and the generationality happening. And then, basically, it was like a dance floor.

Once you get people onto the dance floor, who knows how they're going to dance? But they've got to meet first and, and to mix. And so, how do we do that? Um, uh, camps, all sorts of things.

Uh, we make sure that there's opportunities for young and old to mingle and mix. uh, and I'm not painting, I don't want to paint an idyllic picture. This is hard work. It often doesn't work because everyone likes talking to their own level.

You know, all that kind of stuff. All of that is true. But, uh, if, uh, if we see there's any value in this, uh, vision of intergenerational ministry, uh, then, uh, it behoves us to try and think of ways to encourage it.

In Australia, the model we, or the illustration we often use is the, uh, surf club. Uh, again, with the beach and, uh, with our, kind of, oceans and waves.

[51 : 14] The surf club's a really important institution to help people to learn how to swim and to, kind of, navigate, uh, you know, wild water and all the rest of it. But, if you go to a surf club on a Saturday morning, what you'll see is, uh, guys, usually women as well, 60 and 70 with the parents and the children and they're all passing on how to, how to look after the surf.

And, uh, and that feels like a model for the church to aspire to. Where you've got people involved and, uh, picking, sharing their expertise, older generation taking care of the younger generation, younger generation and the lighting and giving energy to the older generation and those kind of things.

Uh, it's a, uh, picture to, uh, work to. Now, uh, we've gone on a bit with the, um, questions as well. So, I'm suggesting that we take a break now and then, uh, when you come back if you go, we go straight into groups to, uh, think of, just to engage with these questions.

How, how are you, how are you now engaging the household, uh, the whole household of young people, uh, families and things, uh, the relationship with the family and people in your youth group or children's ministry.

Uh, do young people value the church? That's a good question for youth leaders here and how to encourage it. Does the church value young people? How do you see that? How are you enabling young people to participate in the life of the church?

[52 : 39] What might that look like? But as I say, let's take a 10 minute break. Uh, we've been listening for a while and then come back into groups and, uh, we'll, then we'll have a family session after that.

Let me just make a couple of other, uh, general comments. Uh, there are some people who, uh, some churches are taking this idea to a very radical end and they have no youth and children's ministries at all and, uh, they, uh, they have a, they simply lead as a congregation all ages, all stages present and, and that's it.

They don't have any separate ministries, uh, that are there and, uh, the further advance of that is they, um, this is a very few churches but they're committed to family to family evangelism.

So they will only evangelize, uh, if, if a whole family can, uh, meet the whole family and so they work through family. So that's, that's the kind of right out there. Uh, and, uh, not many churches are doing that but certainly some are experimenting.

Uh, most churches experiment with the children in and out. I'm thinking particularly of the service for a while. Uh, and then, uh, I guess the, the question that I would ask there, and this is a question we are asking at the church I go to, is, uh, if you know that you have children present with you for the first 15 to 20 minutes of the, of the congregational meeting, how does that affect what you're doing?

[54 : 06] Uh, do you just simply do what you would do for adults? Uh, does it affect song choice for example? Uh, people need to be aware of language that they're using from the front. Uh, what, what do you do in that time which is maybe acknowledging the fact that children are present or

young people are present?

So that's just a thought that's there. Um, another, uh, we were delighted once, uh, in a, in a church we were at when, uh, we received an email from, uh, one of the volunteer staff, uh, a girl of Andrea and she asked for our permission as parents to approach our daughter to do a one-to-one, um, Bible study mentoring relationship.

So instead of just going and doing it, uh, she engaged us as parents. Uh, our daughter was a teenager so it was, you know, that was all kind of fine and we were delighted that one, she asked us, but two, that she established that relationship and, uh, one of the things that's been really valuable for our daughters is, uh, right through their, their kind of, their church life was an older, uh, usually girl who took an interest in them, uh, and, uh, was that mentoring kind of relationship that's there.

Uh, some, that happened fairly organically, um, the people just did that but some churches are a little more systematic, uh, about it. Um, I guess the, the other thing I think, uh, is how visible are the youth and children's ministries to the congregation?

So, uh, do you commission leaders in front of the whole congregation or are you just doing that by yourself? Do you celebrate, uh, ministries? Uh, I think, in your prayer times, do you pray for the ministries of the church that he's mentioned?

[55 : 50] Just little simple things. It doesn't take a lot to make a big difference, uh, in terms of, uh, of just shifting the dial on this a little bit if you think it's worth doing, uh, uh, Um, and so just kind of taking those, uh, little initiatives, uh, in communication, uh, in, uh, in milestones.

Uh, we often in church, I don't know, do you have Mother's Day and Childers Day? Yeah, so you, you'll often celebrate that. Uh, what about International Children's Day? Uh, is that a, is that an opportunity just to thank God for our children and to, uh, highlight them in their presence?

When, uh, when people graduate from high school or primary school, uh, often we lose kids at those transition points. Uh, but, uh, if a little bit of a fuss can be made of it in the congregation, these people have now finished primary school.

We're, we're looking forward to walking them in the youth group next year. Uh, let's pray for them now. Let's get them up on stage. We can clap, you know, uh, tell us what you've learned, all that kind of stuff. Make a bit of a show and perhaps you're doing these things, but, um, how to, how to make things more visible for the benefit of the congregation, but also for the benefit of the participants and, um, I'm sure, uh, you've got other ideas which are appropriate to your context. In the end, what I'm saying here, it's a, it's a mindset, uh, that if you take it, you start thinking, okay, what could we do? What are the possibilities? And, uh, I'm a believer in having 20 crazy ideas to get the two or three good ones.

[57 : 21] Uh, and so just keep multiplying ideas. Now, that won't work, that won't work. That might, that's a good idea. We could do that low cost, easy, big impact, you know, those kind of things.

So, uh, if it's, if it's of any value at all in terms of thinking about this inter-generationality, um, I'm going to assume your church, uh, at the moment, it's, it's got different generations present, right? So, the, the, everything's there. How do you, how do you work with what the Lord has given you to make it more effective for discipleship for all? That's, that's kind of the question, uh, that, uh, that this, this discussion, uh, poses, um, there.

Anyway, so I'm interested in any questions or comments, uh, about what we've been talking about, uh, so far, um, before we move to our final topic. It's just very good. Okay.

It's a little stretch, sorry. It's like an option if you twitch, I'll say. Okay, that's it. Yeah, there's a question. so you think, about, um, like, engaging with the household, right, and families.

[58 : 24] Yeah. Do you have any suggestions or advice when it comes to sometimes when, yeah, it may not be as cooperative as you hope, Sean turned it off? Again, I think it's all about helping people to feel safe and comfortable and, and moving them along slowly to where, where you feel it ought to be.

So the very first step, and you may be already doing this, might simply be a letter at the beginning of the term saying, we are delighted that your child is in our youth group. Uh, just for your information, this term, we're going to be doing this, this, and this, and we're going to be looking at this part of the Bible, and this is why.

And, and that's it. But you, you've engaged the parents to the extent that you've informed of what you're doing. they're not just off into the ether. Uh, and so that could be, uh, that may be the start of

a relationship at that point.

Uh, a slight advance on that, uh, and we've done this a few times, is we've given an invitation to the parents to come to an open night to see what you do at youth group. Okay, so, I say, uh, you're not sending your kids to North, North Korea.

You know, uh, you know, there's no, no secrets. We want you to come and, uh, and watch. It's like open day. Do you have open day at school? You know, we can go in and watch your kids in the classroom. So, an open day, come and, come and watch the youth group in action and, and see what you're doing.

[59 : 44] And, uh, we'll even throw in a cup of tea and a really nice, you know, whatever, uh, you know, snack. Uh, food always works for people. Yeah. So, small steps and, uh, and, and a little bit of engagement at that point.

Um, the, then it ramps up to if there's, if you notice an issue with the kids particularly, uh, I think parents love it if, uh, you can, uh, help them to identify stuff.

I've, I've noticed, you know, uh, is there, is, you don't want to get into a counselling situation because there's an age imbalance and all that. But, but sometimes you might be able to give a bit of information about the child and I would make it positive.

Uh, you know, even just a note home saying, we really love the way that your child engages, uh, in, uh, discussion, or we really love the way that your, your child really seems to take account of the needs of others around them.

We think this is a great thing and if you really want to kind of throw it in and probably reflects your parenting and, you know, we praise God for that. Um, and that, that will work for a non-Christian parent as much as anything.

[60 : 48] You don't have to respond. It's just simply feedback. It's just, it's just a positive touch, a positive contact and it's just shifting the dial a little bit on the relationship that's there.

So, um, you know, but, yeah, the other thing, uh, I don't know what happens with your youth group where the kids are picked up by their parents. Um, one, one thing we tried and, you know, varying success, we asked a couple of older members of the congregation if they wouldn't mind coming to the youth group, uh, and, uh, being around at the end, um, especially when parents come because often kids don't rush to the car straight away.

The parents have got to wait around a bit and have a, uh, an older face to talk to rather than a youth group person that can sometimes work, you know, and the next step of that is then to ask maybe a couple of older people to actually come along to the youth group as leaders.

We often have older, um, people working with younger children, uh, but, but rarely do we have older people working in a youth group situation but that's it, that's a big jump for everyone at that point.

Young people don't know what's that old boy doing and old people think what do I do, you know, it's kind of scary, uh, but, um, yeah, that's another thing that we've tried, uh, at various points just to say that you don't need to be of the generation to finish the generation.

[62 : 07] Yeah. Okay. Yeah. For Sunday school, I think we, we, we, we, we share with the parents our message, like, uh, key points, key points, so that they can discuss, um, the message with their kids.

Yeah. Yeah. Is it a common thing? Ah, yeah, well, again, different, uh, just to, I keep talking about it, actually, but we're experimenting with this again, so what we've decided is that the Sunday school program, uh, is in, uh, concert with the preaching program.

So if the preaching program and the church is Romans, the Sunday school kids are doing Romans. So the idea being, uh, that, um, everyone's studying the same passage at the same time across.

Um, but our Sunday school was really different, uh, yeah, if it's, our materials are different from the sermon in the church. So I'm thinking if we could share teaching materials, not very detail, but maybe some of the important parents.

Absolutely. Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, yeah, but you could certainly do that. Um, again, uh, you've got to decide whether to do that as a one-off at the beginning of the term. I would, I would probably start, uh, simply, uh, just to let us say this term, we're going to be doing this.

[63 : 23] Uh, these are the main points we had to bring out and you could even suggest a couple of questions, uh, that, uh, might be useful at some point during the term, uh, for the child and make it open-ended.

So, uh, usually, I made this mistake, uh, when the kids come home from Sunday school, I say, did you enjoy Sunday school? They say, yep, gone, end of conversation. Right? See?

But if I say, uh, what did you learn at Sunday school? It's just a slightly more open-ended question and, uh, they at least have to give me, I was about Jesus. So, I can say, it's always about Jesus. What did they say about Jesus? And, uh, he's a kind man. Oh, great, okay, off you go. You know, but it just, just extends the conversation a little bit, uh, there. But I, I think, uh, communication with parents about what you're teaching them is, uh, is good for the relationship.

Uh, but it's also, it shows your interest, that you're responsible to the parents for what's being done and, uh, and you're, you're acknowledging that, um, in doing that. So, I think that's a really important step.

[64 : 26] You've got to work out how much, how much to do it because it's such a, if it's a new thing, uh, and you do it every week so, you know, it's like a paper, that's scary, but, but once, and then just build up slowly, uh, if you want to make that more reconcilable.

I think that's a great one. Yeah. Any other kind of questions, comments? Can you, I've got it out for you, but let's, let's go quickly just to loving, uh, just, just to finish off and I'll just give you the bullet points here.

basically what we're talking about here is loving ministry to young people, uh, and, uh, that means, uh, we need to understand that, uh, the, the people in our youth groups and children's groups, uh, are children and young people.

In other words, they are not adults. There is a developmental progression, uh, which means that we don't teach young people in the same way as we teach older people as we teach adults.

There are, there are just simply physical and mental capacities, uh, which come into play that we need to, uh, understand, which is why we usually separate out the teaching time.

[65 : 49] Uh, because otherwise if you've got everyone in your church, then you either preach to the three-year-old and the adults think what's going on or you preach to the adults and the kids just don't know.

So, we, that's why we, we usually, most churches have segregated teaching times because it's an acknowledgement, uh, and this is loving, it's meeting a person where they are, that they have a different stage and age and capacity.

And so, when, uh, you, uh, teach your young children, uh, you, uh, they're very short, I mean, the attention span rule, that it's my rough rule of thumb is that most people's attention span is about a minute per year of age, okay, until you get to about 30 and then it starts coming backwards.

Okay, not quite right, but, but thereabouts. But, uh, so, uh, with young children then, you know, you've got to switch the activity pretty regularly to hold attention and it needs to be engaging and, uh, ideally engaging as many senses as possible.

So, it's, uh, take, uh, ear, uh, sight, sound and, and especially most young kids, uh, what we call kinesthetic learners, they love to move. So, you'll do some dancing or movement or craft or activity, something to keep them occupied and engaged, uh, there.

[67 : 08] Um, and we also know with young children of course that they are concrete so very simple concepts, uh, one idea, uh, come at a number of ways. You can be more abstract the older the child gets.

But there's also, uh, kind of a social, kind of cultural dimension that comes in. Uh, so particularly with, uh, uh, teenagers, the whole idea of them exploring their identity is something to keep in mind as we think about, uh, the Bible teaching.

We're, we're helping people in a very, uh, timely, flux when they're trying to work out who they are.

Um, and that's a massive responsibility for youth group leaders. But you could not be doing a better thing than in teaching them the gospel, who God is and understanding themselves in their life.

So, to be, uh, loving is to be, um, uh, acknowledging that children are children. Uh, that, uh, they're not a prince. Uh, that, uh, you know, that they've got energy, that little boys have very bony bottoms and so they like to wiggle on seats and stuff because it's uncomfortable to sit, all those kind of things.

Uh, lots of different stuff comes into play there. Um, of course, uh, the gospel comes to us in cultures and so what you do needs to be relevant to not only your ethnic culture but also the youth culture that's around.

[68 : 29] Just, it helps to know a little bit about what's going on, uh, in, uh, in young people's lives. Uh, that worked for me for a long time because I had young children. They're gone. I'm now

completely irrelevant to, uh, anyone under 17.

I just, I've lost the total contact kind of with that group. Uh, but if I was going to be in a youth group, I'd need to be doing a little bit more, uh, than I am in trying to see some of the things.

Don't have to, you don't have to be, uh, a native to the culture but you need to have a little bit of an insight into what's going on so that, uh, you can see. And, uh, and there will be cultural differences in, uh, learning and teaching, uh, just because different cultures do things differently.

And, and again, uh, loving is to understand that we don't treat everyone the same way. One size doesn't feel all. And the other point is that, uh, we need to provide ministry that is safe and ethical. Um, uh, safe ministry, uh, is that a phrase that you will use? Yeah. Um, protecting children, uh, so, uh, in Australia now, uh, we have, uh, children's checks for all child workers in church.

[69 : 40] Uh, they have to, uh, get a, uh, have to do regular training, they have to have a child, they have to have a number, which means they've been vetted by the police, that they've got no criminal record and things like that.

Uh, there's a, uh, a whole bunch of, uh, checks and balances have been put into, uh, play. Um, we have, uh, very strict ratios of, uh, leader to, uh, to students.

So the, the old days, you know, you might be in a room with 25 kids, that's not a great thing. So I think the ratio is something like one to, one to seven or one to eight leaders to, uh, people in a youth group and it's a little, uh, it's a little, it's a little smaller ratio for younger children, uh, just trying to do that.

Now that puts the pressure on finding leaders, uh, and, uh, and so then the temptation of course is to grab everyone as a leader but one of your responsibilities is to make sure that, uh, your leadership is appropriate, that, uh, that they are the right people to lead uh, and, uh, so that involves a little bit of checking and also training.

Uh, this is all part of, uh, kind of a safe ministry, uh, program, uh, that comes into play. So this, this whole idea of loving really does cover a multitude of issues, uh, from, as I say, the way that we treat children to, uh, selection of leaders, and training, uh, and, uh, all those things.

[71 : 03] The application, uh, engaging young people needs to be developmentally appropriate. Effective ministry to young people is contextual. That, that's the danger, sorry, of, uh, sometimes getting, uh, prepared materials.

Uh, uh, often, uh, prepared materials, uh, we, we found, particularly in the youth space, comes from the United States. And, uh, one thing we know in Australia is we are not Americans.

Uh, and so, uh, sometimes there's a translation you have to make, uh, either in the activities that they suggest, uh, even sometimes the flavour of the teaching, uh, just because it's written for a Australian context, uh, and not an Australian context.

And so, uh, that would be, again, my caution with the material from YouthWorks, that's written for an Australian context. It may not translate into the Malaysian context.

And, uh, that would also go for the children's material on, um, um, the, uh, the, the Max 7 website. Uh, just, just, you will, you will intuitively pick that up that sometimes it comes to be aware.

[72 : 11] But we need to choose our, uh, leaders wisely and we need to look after our leaders. Uh, training days like this are a good thing. Uh, social time with leaders, boosting morale, uh, uh, rewarding leaders by recognition in church, praying for leaders, uh, of our ministries.

All of these things are ways of showing, uh, that we, uh, care, um, and, uh, doing, uh, that kind of duty for, uh, our people. So, uh, there are our four principles we, we probably should spend more time on the one.

I'll give you just a couple of minutes on discussion. So, how do you consider the developmental needs of your young people? Is your ministry to young people appropriate to your context? And how do you choose and equip your leaders? How are you protecting young people? So, let's just say, just before, we'll round up because I know we're not a finish, hard start, you know, hard finish of that.

So, just with your group around you, maybe just pick one of those questions. And, uh, and just a quick discussion again, just to give some new biri from the biri. Thank you.

[73 : 49] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[77 : 49] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[80 : 47] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. shift the dial or whatever it's going to be I'm going to, we're going to invite a teacher into our next team meeting to talk to us about how they teach ACU arms and that's the group I've got lots of different possibilities we will stop there listening to people around, I'm aware that I'm speaking to very experienced and you know doing a great job listening to the conversation, just the snippets I'm hearing, so I hope what I've said has been helpful in getting you to think about your roles, but again just to repeat what I said at the very beginning last week, it's a real privilege for me to be here, to be with people who are debating their spare time to children's and youth ministry I've no doubt you could be doing something else with the time that you're using doing that, but it's a sacrifice of your time, it's for a good cause and as I say I honour you for that it's been a privilege to be part of that and I'll finish you in prayer

Greg, is that okay? That's great Father, we do thank you for calling us into the gathering that we know as church, the congregations and all the activities that go around them we thank you that you've helped us to feel that responsibility for nurturing and discipling young people and children and the various ministries with which we're involved Father, we do pray that you will continue to sustain us in those ministries give us the energy to do that in the midst of our whatever other responsibilities we have in our lives Father, we also pray that you will help us to find the joy that is there in learning from the young people that we are engaged with even as we are teaching them and Father, we help us to continue to see what it means to participate in your body in the church using our gifts benefiting from the gifts of others and Father, we pray that you will help us today to seek of ways which might modify perhaps our practice or just enhance that little bit that we can do what we're doing in a way that is pleasing to you as we desire to do so and we pray just in Jesus' name

Amen Amen Amen Amen

[86 : 08] Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen

Amen