



AUTHENTIC SPACE

Statistics and Challenges: Discussion Guide Questions

Searching for Space: *Prior to the gathering, instruct participants to go online to view Kris Sledge's portion of the "Engaging with Young Adults in Ministry" presentation at the 2014 Susquehanna Annual Conference.*

- 1) As you are watching Kris' presentation, note any of the statistics that surprise or concern you.
 - Reflect on your experience in the local church, and try to remember any instances where you found the church to be overprotective, shallow, anti-science, repressive, exclusive, or doubtless. Consider being prepared to share one of those experiences with the group.

Find Some Space: *Start each gathering by asking everyone to share their thoughts with the group.*

- 1) Before the group arrives, arrange a variation of the listed items on a table in your meeting space. There should be one item for every individual in the group. (Make sure to have extras on hand in the event that someone brings a friend.) As individuals arrive, ask them to select one item that interests them from those arranged on the table. Once everyone has arrived and selected an item, ask each person to share with the group how the item they selected could be used (literally or symbolically) to encourage someone to become involved with a church.

- 2) After everyone has shared, ask them to switch items with the person sitting next to them. Then ask each individual to brainstorm how their new item could be used (literally or symbolically) to discourage someone from being involved with a church.

- 3) Have a short discussion about how something that is an encouragement for one person might just as easily be a discouragement for someone else.

- Bible
- iPod/MP3 Player/CD
- Sports Equipment
- Hammer
- Wallet
- Dinner Plate
- Photo Album
- Novel or Newspaper
- Video Game
- Box of Crayons
- Journal
- Coffee Mug

Open with the prayer written by your group during the first session of the series.

Measure The Space: Participants will receive an overview of the subject and create a baseline for discussion.

1) Watch Chapter 1 of “ Statistics and Challenges “

- Tell the person next to you reasons you have heard people give for disengaging from the church. Share your “best” reasons with the group.
 - Do you think any of these reasons are “legitimate excuses” for not wanting to be involved in a church? Why or why not?
 - How did your experiences as a teen influence your involvement in church as an adult?
 - If you have adult children, how did your children interact with the church early on in life, and can you tell if it had any influence on their faith as adults?
 - How could our congregation do more to integrate children and youth into the life of the church?
 - What has been a moment of hope you have seen in young people in our church?

61% of Young Adult Protestants disengage from regular church attendance after graduating high school.

Use The Space: Participants are invited to take some form of action regarding young adult ministry.

1) Watch Chapter 2 of “ Statistics and Challenges “

- List the ways the church can serve as a support structure for young adults.
(Consider keeping this list in a visible place for the duration of your study as a reference for further discussion.)
 - How could our church offer an additional support system for young adults without threatening the support systems they already have?
 - Do you think it makes a difference to use the term “emerging adult” instead of “young adult”? Does a change in terminology impact how we view or interact with adults in that category?
- In the video, Kris asks the question, “Everything can be sacred, right?”
 - What is your response to that?
 - In your opinion, what makes something sacred?
 - Why might there be differences between what people see as sacred?
- How can considering multiple viewpoints encourage relationship building and increase a young adult’s desire to be part of the Christian community?

Use The Space: Participants are invited to take some form of action regarding young adult ministry.

1) Watch Chapter 3 of “ Statistics and Challenges “

- How does our congregation develop leaders?
 - What are practices that we have as a congregation that either help or hinder young people in being actively involved in leadership opportunities?
 - In what arenas are we willing to let young people make mistakes in order to encourage them to take on larger leadership roles?
- Create a list of all the leadership opportunities available within your congregation. Circle the top three opportunities that would be most impacted by incorporating young adults into its leadership. Begin to pray about who God is calling into those opportunities.

Share The Space: *Participants are offered a challenge to complete before the next meeting.*

- 1) Read Matthew 10:1-11 As you are involved with our congregation over the next several weeks pay attention to the people in the 18-35 age demographic.
 - How are they involved with our church?
 - Who do they have relationships with?
Who do they *not* have relationships with?
 - How can we proclaim the good news to them?

- 2) Read Matthew 28:16-20 As you are going about your life the next several weeks, at the grocery, doctors office, sporting event, etc, watch for people in the 18-35 age demographic.
 - How do they look?
How are they behaving?
 - Who are they with or talking to?
 - Consider what the good news is for these people?