



Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

Youth Ministry in the CRCNA

Vision for Ministry

We believe that healthy youth ministry takes place in congregations that are shaped by grace and committed to preparing God's people for works of service. All of us, from the oldest to the youngest, are sinners called to come to the cross to find new life in Jesus Christ. All of us, from the oldest to the youngest, are called to mature in that grace our entire lives. Youth ministry flourishes in congregations that have a strong commitment to lifelong faith formation.

Quotes of Note

"Mentors and apprentices are partners in an ancient human dance, and one of teaching's great rewards is the daily chance it gives us to get back on the dance floor. It is the dance of the spiraling generations, in which the old empower the young with their experience and the young empower the old with new life, reweaving the fabric of the human community as they touch and turn." —from the book *The Generative Church* by Cory Siebel (Wipf and Stock, 2019)

Contact Information

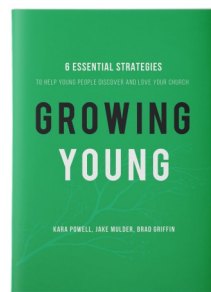
Ron deVries **CRCNA Youth Ministry Catalyzer**

780-619-6566

youthministry@crcna.org

crcna.org/youth

twitter.com/crcna_youth



Growing Young

A few months into my second year as Youth Champion, I continue to focus on providing what was so valuable to me as a new youth leader. I was introduced to this denominational network at a time when I was in need of resources and connections to others who were navigating youth ministry. Time spent with these individuals lead to new resources, wisdom, and people to follow up with when I found myself wondering what to do next.

Our expanding network within the classis includes paid youth leaders, volunteers, pastors, classis leadership, and lay people from our congregations who have a heart for the youth of the church. As I continue to hear their stories and learn about the strengths and struggles of their individual ministries, I've been able to connect them to resources and to each other. I'm not always the one with the best answers, but I can identify where the answers are and help make those connections.

Two of my focuses have been promoting intergenerational activities and supporting families in their ministry to their children. The old "it takes a village" mentality has been supported by church-based research in building a lasting faith in our young people. It's not something we're likely to dispute, but it may take an intentional shift in the way we seek to grow in faith together.

Cont'd on page 2

All Churches Grow Old...but Strategic Churches Are Growing Young

Churches across the country are both shrinking & aging as more young people disengage. However, there are scores of congregations that are bucking this trend & developing cultures that welcome, empower, & engage teenagers & young adults.

The Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) has conducted groundbreaking research with over 250 of these leading congregations to learn what they do right. Based on this study of a diverse group of churches, we've discovered six essential strategies any church can use to better involve & retain young people. What's more, we've found that as these innovative churches engage younger generations, it breathes life & vitality into the whole church.

Through the **Regional Growing Young Cohort**, we want to help you sort through the numerous strategies you could try & instead focus on what's most essential in helping young people discover & love your church. This advanced training model invites your team to journey with like-minded churches for one year, through

- **two in-person summits** that dive into the research behind Growing Young, foster small & large group discussions, & help you create a plan to implement new strategies in your church.
- **regular online webinars** hosted by FYI & other ministry voices on topics such as leading change, sociological & cultural trends among today's young people, conquering conflict, & more.
- **one year of personalized coaching**, including support in developing a strategy for change.
- **access to the church-wide version of the Growing Young Assessment**, a comprehensive online diagnostic test that sheds light on areas for growth & guides your steps.

The Regional Growing Young Cohort will provide your church with both a wholistic philosophy & practical ideas to make much-needed shifts in your congregational culture today.

Join us for this cohort & be among the first church leaders within the CRC & RCA to implement new strategies to grow young. For more information, contact:

Ron deVries, CRCNA Youth Ministry Catalyzer
780-619-6566

youthministry@crcna.org

[Cont'd from page 1]

A few years ago, I was introduced to the book *Growing Young*. It included two things I was actively looking for at the time: suggestions for understanding teenagers and help finding ways to engage them in the church. Recently I had an opportunity to train on this material with the Fuller Youth Institute as members of our Youth Champions network prepare to serve as coaches on this *Growing Young* mindset. I have come to realize that the things young people need to grow and feel engaged in the life of the church are much the same thing we're *all* in need of. I'm excited now for the opportunity to walk with others who are seeking an increased vitality in their church life across the generations.

This *Growing Young* mentality is not about relinquishing the keys to our churches to the next generation, but it does include a willingness to share meaningful responsibility with potential future leaders. We also need to work to understand the younger generation, a practice I've found to be critical with our older members as well. And doesn't our community grow stronger when we take an interest in each other's lives? If we grow to know each other better, focus our ministry on the life and words of Jesus, create warm community, and make it a priority to support our families, a new generation of the church rises up and we are better equipped to meet the needs of our full membership and the communities we live and worship in.

- Travis Deur

Suggested Resources for You

[Youth Culture Matters Podcast](#)

[What Teens Did a Decade Ago that They Don't Do Anymore](#)

Easy Win Resource of the Month!

New Book!! [The Generative Church: Global Conversations about Investing in Emerging Generations](#)