



THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

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The
Good Old Days



By the turn of the 20th Century, the culture of the Protestant Church in America had:

- Little mobility in families
- Community churches
- Public schools that were “Protestant parochial schools”
- A Protestant ethos and atmosphere
- The Bible was read and prayers were prayed in the home
- Blue Laws

based on information from *Will Our Children Have Faith?* by John Westerhoff III



The goals remain the same;

however, the means to the end must change.

“To grow up healthy,
our youth need to be supported
and known by at least five adults
in addition to their parents or caregivers
who are willing to invest time with them
personally and spiritually.”

Eugene C. Reohlekpertain,
Building Assets, Strengthening Faith:
An Intergenerational Survey for Congregations,
Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2003

Why Relationships Matter

- Young people who experience strong developmental relationships are more likely to report a wide range of social-emotional strengths and other indicators of well-being and thriving.
- Young people with strong relationships are more resilient in the face of stress and trauma.
- Young people do better when they experience a strong web of relationships with many people.

<http://www.search-institute.org/blog/new-research-report>

“By the time our adolescents graduate from high school, they will have become so much a part of their entire church family that when they’re out on their own they will want to seek out a similar church family to enfold and nurture them (and vice versa) in adulthood.”

“This cannot happen if their youth group experience — even the strongest youth program — operates in isolation from the rest of the church/faitch community. Because then, in adulthood, they will seek out the types of relationships they had with their peers rather than the types of relationships they could have formed with all of the ages in the entire congregation, and they will never find a church that ‘feels like’ the youth group they remember.”



“The church does not *have* an educational program.

The church IS an educational program!”

- Maria Harris

What relationships already exist
in your congregation
that could be intentionally nurtured
to become more faith-forming?
