



# Tips for Sharing Assessment Results with Your Church

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Growing Young Assessment Supporting Materials

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## Growing Young Assessment

There are a variety of effective ways you might share the results of your Growing Young Assessment with your congregation. As you decide the method that might work best for your church, here are several tips and suggestions you may find helpful.

### 1 **Begin with the end in mind.**

Carefully consider your goals in sharing the assessment results with your congregation. Do you want others in your church to review the full report and give input into next steps? Do you just want to provide a summary of the highlights and next steps so that others are in the loop? Or something else?

### 2 **Vet the results with smaller groups.**

Prior to sharing the results with your overall congregation, consider discussing them first with a smaller team. Ask for honest reactions and feedback. Consider gathering a group of teenagers and a group of young adults to get their perspective on the assessment findings, and solicit their ideas about possible next steps. Then perhaps present to a larger leadership team from your church.

### 3 **Choose the venue.**

There are numerous venues you might consider for sharing your results, including but not limited to:

- a. In a special announcement at the beginning or end of a worship service.
- b. As part of a sermon.
- c. As a physical handout people receive during or after a service, or mailed to their home.
- d. In an email.
- e. On a special page on your website.
- f. During a special congregational meeting.
- g. In a children's ministry and/or youth group parent meeting.

## 4 Consider the flow.

No matter what venue you select, we've found the following flow and specific elements to be helpful:

- a. Start with why: Help others understand why this topic is so important. If you need guidance, review chapter 1 of *Growing Young*.
- b. Explain what Growing Young is (and isn't): Growing Young is about becoming a church young people will increasingly discover and love. It is about your overall church and not just the youth ministry. It is about hope and where God is leading. It is about holistic discipleship of all generations. It is *not* about leaving older generations behind or idolizing youth. It is *not* about programmatic quick fixes such as becoming a hip church or watering down the teaching.
- c. Frame with hope and the positive: The essence of growing young is that aging and decline does not have to be your church's reality. Your church can grow young, and is probably already doing several things well that can be celebrated.
- d. Be honest about struggles: Don't shy away from highlighting the areas where your church needs to grow, or some of the areas where your church sees things differently, according to the assessment results.
- e. Share stories: While facts are helpful, we've found people are drawn to and motivated most by stories. Consider sharing a story from *Growing Young* or sharing a story of hope from your own congregation that frames the assessment results. If appropriate, invite a young person or two within your congregation to share a story of how they have felt connected to and supported by your congregation.
- f. Use visuals: Your assessment report contains several helpful visuals that you might consider including in your slides or handouts.
- g. Give them a role: Help your congregation know that every person has a critical part to play in growing young. At the very least, invite them to notice and encourage one young person in the congregation this week.

## 5 Ask good questions.

Just as important as the information you will communicate is people's reflection on that information. You can help them reflect by asking good questions. Consider asking participants to think back to their experiences when they were in their teenage years or twenties, how the results you presented fit with their experiences in the church today, or asking about their hopes and dreams for your congregation and its ministry with young people.

## 6 Invite feedback.

Consider how you will solicit feedback. If it is an in-person meeting, will you do live question and answer? If you are sending results electronically, will you invite feedback via email or other format?

## 7 Provide resources and explain next steps.

For those who would like to learn more or participate in the next steps, how will you enable them to do so? We provide several free informational handouts, discussion guides, and other resources on our website. You might consider hosting a *Growing Young* reading group (or multiple groups), starting a special council or task force, or other next step that fits your congregation. Clearly explain any next steps your team has identified based on the results. Consider ahead of time how young people themselves will or may be involved in any predetermined next steps.

## 8 Practice empathy.

Empathy is more than just a core commitment our research uncovered that should be demonstrated toward young people. Take a step toward growing young by demonstrating empathy in your presentation. Step into the shoes of those who will receive these results. How might they hear them and why? For those who are resistant to what they hear, are they just disagreeing with the data? Or might there be something behind that resistance that you can empathize with?

## 9 Pray.

While it appears last on this list, we hope prayer and dependence on God will saturate every aspect of your Growing Young assessment. At the end of the day, it is not data or our best laid plans that bring about change and growth — it is the activity of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God would bring clarity to your presentation, understanding to your congregation, and a sense of unity in the overall body of your church.