MAY 2020

QB
Y&YA

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

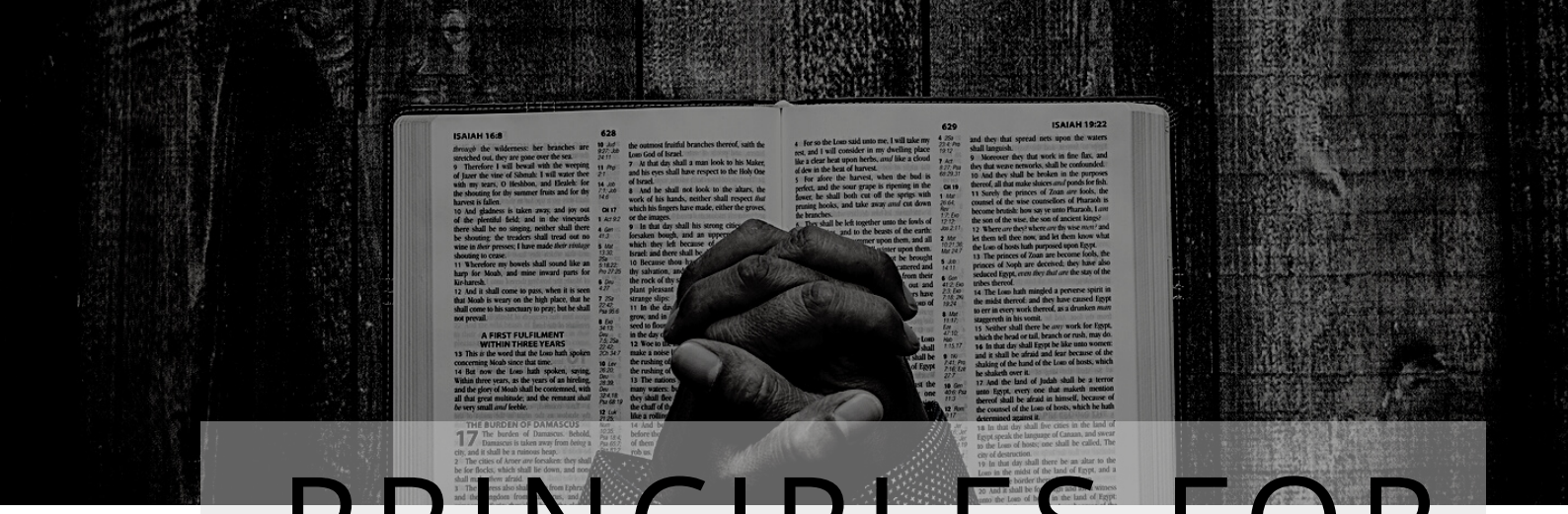
Queensland Baptists

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

In light of the QB priorities and the COVID-19 season, we've gathered together some of our youth and young adult pastors and leaders to look at principles, practical ideas, resources, and ways to connect together.

While the word 'unprecedented' is being used a lot – and there are certainly never-before-seen events unfolding in this world right now – a lot of what is happening to the church is not new. We know that throughout history households have worshipped together, church gatherings have met in homes, and there have even been limitations placed on our Sunday gatherings. Yet we have been graced to find new ways to worship, evangelise, make disciples and serve our communities in crises. We are still committed to the six QB priorities, but we need to find new ways to pursue them. We also know that by the grace of God, in many harsh seasons for the church, we have seen 'unprecedented' growth in numbers of people coming to Jesus, and depth of faith of those who know Him.

One of the things we know about young people is that they are the hyper-connected generation, they're searching for community. John Dickson said, "Why the expression 'social distancing', when what we mean is 'physical distancing' (and what we need is 'social nearing')?". We need to be social nearing and physical distancing. So how do we do this. How do we create "social nearing" or community when we are to physically distanced? Hopefully this article will help facilitate some philosophical and practical steps forward for our Youth and Young Adult Ministries across Queensland Baptists.



PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING Y&YA

What to do in a physically distanced world yet longing for social nearing

- Meet regularly (Heb 10:24-26)
- Engage with parents (Exo 20:12)
- Make disciples (Matt 28:19)
- Go to all the world (Acts 1:8)
- Teach the bible (John 21:15-19; Heb 4:12)
- Cultivate a prayer culture (1 Thes 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6-7)

All six statements above align with what God has been saying for millennia and are no different for us yesterday, before COVID-19, or today, living through it. It is easy for someone to state these things but how do we do them when we cannot connect in person like we did a few weeks ago? You may have heard the statement, “we are the most connected people of all time, yet the most (socially) disconnected of all time”, the era we find ourselves can be viewed as an opportunity to create community using online platforms. The great thing is that we live in a time where there is, likely, a helpful platform to suit the needs of everyone’s connectivity.

GREAT IDEAS FOR ENGAGING Y&YA

We have organised our ideas under the following principles.
These ideas should be read and considered in accordance with the parameters of your church's child safety policy.

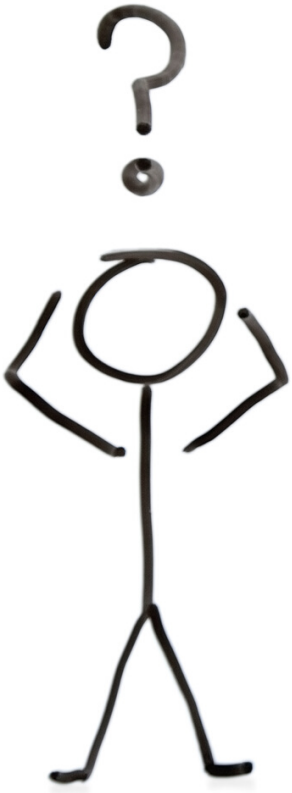
1. MEET REGULARLY WHERE TRACEABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY CAN HAPPEN

Traceability = conversation has digital footprint and can be accessed if need arise
Accountability = correct student leader ratios. 2 leaders to 2 - 10 students

- Have leaders send regular group texts to students (can create side conversation – increased risk)
- Start a Facebook messenger group conversation (Everyone participates)
- Start a Whatsapp group (Everyone participates)
- Have small groups via zoom
- Online gaming competitions using Discord to facilitate conversations and fun commentary
- Instagram nature exploration – create a helpful hashtag
- Instagram or Facebook live a Q&A session. Submit questions via email from the day before event and during

- Games via conference call:
  - Charades – Host side messages words to participants individually
  - Jackbox.tv – Drawful etc…
  - Hangman – whiteboard function
  - Pictionary – whiteboard function

- Games via email and socials:
  - The evolving story
  - Caption this picture
  - Guess that Logo
  - Guess that quote
  - Name that celebrity



2. **ENGAGE WITH PARENTS - USE THIS TIME TO CONNECT WITH PARENTS OF STUDENTS**

- Review your attendance database
- Have a discussion with your team about how to talk with parents and set small challenges for yourself and your team to do
- Example: Find out one thing new about a parent
- Facilitate a parent leader zoom information and Q&A conversation – an opportunity for leaders to meet parents face to face and have parents experience what their child/ren will
- Send texts to parents to check-in how they and their child/ren are
- Help the parents get to know their child/ren better by creating a weekly email that challenges them forward. – this suggest that we care deeply for the parent's struggle and their child/ren

3. **MAKE DISCIPLES**

- Create helpful daily rhythms of devotional thought or use YouVersion
- Create prayer triads (1 leader 2 Students until they can do it themselves)
- Start a discipleship huddle via Zoom

- Invest in your leaders – buy them a book and go through it with them
- Encourage your leaders – words of affirmation and giving them accessibility to you
- Pass around your favourite leadership podcasts – Rethinking Youth Ministry, Carey Nieuwhof, Theology on Mission
- Pass around your reading list to your leaders
- Ask the questions regularly, “what is Jesus saying, and what are you doing about it”

4. **GO TO ALL THE WORLD**

- Encourage your team to buy one thing for a neighbour, like toilet paper and pasta
- Facilitate a food drive for vulnerable persons and people who have lost jobs. Have your students drop one or two items that could be helpful to your community – non-perishable foods are cheap so students can participate easier
- Facilitate an acts of service operation – find out who needs their yards tidied – no inside

5. **TEACH THE BIBLE**

- Live stream a pre-recorded sermon/devotion and send out questions or have a conference call using zoom to facilitate small group conversation around the message
- Live stream a Social Distancing Bible School – work through a book of the Bible, one passage per day
- Engage in a reading plan – YouVersion
- Watch “The Bible Project” with students using zoom and have a conversation after
- Use D.I.G and have a competition to see who can do it the fastest

6. **CULTIVATE A PRAYER CULTURE**

- Start an online prayer journal in a Facebook group or email thread – reminding all to "reply all"
- Parents prayer Facebook group or Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger
- Facilitate a "Pen Pal Programme" – connect students to write prayer requests and praise points to one another
- Prayer events via zoom
- Create a "Pray for two" culture – students are to pray for 2 people in their world to meet Jesus

GET IN TOUCH

The above suggestions are somewhat vague so make sure if you have questions or require a conversation around how you can be more effective please do not hesitate to contact Aaron Fozzard (me) on Facebook messenger, aaron.fozzard@qb.org.au, call or text me on 0404 101 574

RESOURCES

1. **APPS**

- The Bible Project - https://bibleproject.com/ and https://www.youtube.com/channel/
- SKAR Ministries - https://www.Facebook.com/PastorSKAR/ and https://www.twitch.tv/pastorskar
- YouVersion - https://www.youversion.com/

2. **LEADERSHIP PODCASTS - FIND YOUR FAVOURITE PODCAST APP**

- Rethinking Youth Ministry – Think Orange
- Carey Neiuwhof
- Theology on Mission – David Fitch
- Great selections here https://blog.feedspot.com/youth_ministry_podcasts/

3. **PLATFORMS - ONLY IF YOUR POLICY ALLOWS**

- Whatsapp – where you get your favourite apps or https://www.whatsapp.com/
- Zoom - https://zoom.us/
- Facebook - where you get you favourite apps or https://www.Facebook.com/
- Discord - where you get you favourite apps or https://discordapp.com/
- Twitch - where you get you favourite apps or https://www.twitch.tv/
- Instagram – where you get you favourite apps or https://www.instagram.com/
- Ask your students what they are using too, they will be a great resource

4. **BOOKS TO HELP YOU LEAD AND DEVELOP YOUR TEAMS TO BE EFFECTIVE**

- iGen – Jean Twenge (Secular data, great to help you make wise decisions around screen use)
- Meet Generation Z – James Emery White
- Building a Discipling Culture – Mike Breen
- The Glue – Mike Stevens
- Target – Rich Atkinson
- Faithful Presence – David Fitch

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is time for us to grow in our leadership, we will be stretched a lot. However, we have the "Spirit of assurance" because of Jesus life, death, burial, and resurrection. During this time some will lose jobs in our congregations, experience unexpected grievances, new hardships, and constant change. We stand on the great "foundation stone" it is He, Jesus, that has this situation. Our role in this is to be faithfully present to Him as He leads us, and those around us. We must bring joy, happiness and community to a joyless, and to all. This is a great opportunity to learn how to disciple our people in a new way. I urge you to take up the challenge and lead well. Jesus is Lord and will do something amazing in our us, our people, and our community during COVID-19.