



# REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

## Ministry to Mosaics: What's Your Take?

by Dr. Joel Nelson, Administrator – WELS Youth Discipleship

The Mosaic Generation is a term used to describe those born between 2002 and 1984 (ages 7-25 today). The term was coined by Christian author George Barna and is mainly used within Evangelical Christian circles—other sources refer to this generation by the name “Generation Y” or “Internet Generation (iGen)”.

According to Barna, this generation is “very mosaic in every aspect of their life . . . There’s [no attribute] that really dominates like you might have seen with prior generations.” Barna also describes this group as comfortable with contradiction, post-modern, exhibiting non-linear thinking, eclectic in lifestyle, fluid in their personal relationships, with cut-and-paste values, and a hybrid spiritual perspective. While the labels assigned to the previous pair of generations were based upon their size - i.e. Baby Boom, Baby Bust - this new group is more likely to be known for their character, even though they are likely to eventu-

ally surpass the Baby Boomers as the most numerous generation in U.S. history.

### Teens Change

One of the toughest things about teens is that just when you think you understand them, they change. New research suggests that the common wisdom about teenagers is now passé: a whole new set of perspectives and behaviors characterizes today’s teens, showing significant departures from the customs of teens as recently as five years ago.

### Self-Images Have Changed

Remember when grunge music ruled and “slackers” dominated the limelight? Indeed, you don’t have to go back very far to recall Baby Busters complaining about abandonment, the hopelessness of life, the limited value of education, and distaste for



## IN THIS ISSUE

The 7 Deadly Sins of Inviting Volunteers.....	3
Survey Says (Part 4).....	4
Everyday Encouragement.....	5

### “Follow the Path, Lead the Way”

WELS International Youth Rally

- July 8-11
- Iowa State University – Ames, IA
- 1,425 teens and leaders attending from eight different countries!

Comments about this

## REACH!

and ideas for future issues can be directed to . . .

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Continued on  
page 2

## ADDITIONAL DATA\* ON MOSAICS

- **Mosaics - those born between 1984 and 2002.**  
Busters - those born between 1965 and 1983.  
Boomers - those born between 1946 and 1964.  
Builders - those born between 1927 and 1945.  
Seniors - those born in 1926 and earlier
- **Mosaics are less likely than any other generation to volunteer time to their church** (12% of Mosaics report volunteering). Conversely, 23% of Busters, 29% of Boomers, 34% of Elders (Builders and Seniors) have volunteered at a church in the past week.
- Small group participation appears to be positively correlated with age, with 26% of Elders, 24% of Boomers, 19% of Busters and **20% of Mosaics reporting that they participated in a small group in the past week.**
- Compared to 60% of Elders who **have a "quiet time"** during the week, 54% of Boomers, 39% of Busters and **35% of Mosaics** do the same.
- **33% Mosaics**, 43% of Busters, 49% of Boomers, 53% of Elders **attend church on a given Sunday.**
- In a typical week, **32% of Mosaics**, 42% of Busters, 47% of Boomers, 58% of Elders (Builders and Seniors combined) **read the Bible.**
- **Mosaics are the age group least likely than any other age group to pray to God.** In a given week, we found that 65% of Mosaics, 82% of Busters, 90% of Boomers, 88% of Elders (Builders and Seniors) report praying to God.

\*(All data is from 2006)

the rampant hypocrisy in our society. Things have changed dramatically in the teen world since the mid-nineties. Today's teenagers, now dominated by the Mosaic generation, are more likely to state that they are satisfied with their life, look forward to a challenging future, feel intelligent and attractive, and can optimistically face tomorrow because they trust most other people. A majority of teenagers have given up on the anxieties related to abandonment; teens typically feel relatively secure about their life and their future.

This turnabout in self-esteem has triggered a growing desire to excel in school and to have a breadth of life adventures and experiences. While there are still millions of teenagers who are struggling to find their place in the world, the prevailing mood among teens has shifted dramatically in the past half-decade to a more upbeat, optimistic and self-reliant perspective.

Although more than four out of five teens believe that adults see young people in a mostly negative light, that has deterred few from pursuing their dreams of the good life. The most common future desires of teens include a quality education, vibrant health, intimate personal relationships and a comfortable lifestyle. A major change in attitude is the shift from feeling ill-equipped for the future and harboring anger or self-pity for that condition, as was the norm a decade ago, to the current perspective of addressing their lack of preparation by aggressively seeking the resources and experiences required to raise their capacity level.

### Faith Commitments

One thing that has not changed much is the number of teens who have an interest in faith. For more than a decade, teenagers have been among the most spiritually interested individuals in the nation. However, sensitivity to faith matters has not resulted in a boom

in Christian conversions. In fact, while more than three out of five teenagers say they are spiritual, spiritual goals and life outcomes are not among the top-rated goals they have established for their future.

### The Future Church

Barna's firm conducted nationwide interviews among nearly 3000 teenagers. One aspect of his research explored the types of churches that are most appealing to young people. The study found that the church factors that appeal to a young person depend upon their spiritual inclinations. Teens who consider themselves to be Christian were most interested in the church's internal culture, the depth of community among congregants and the quality of the spiritual substance provided by the church. In contrast, among teens that do not think of themselves as Christian the most appealing facets are the presence of their friends in the church, convenient location, the level of trust and care evident among congregants, and service to the poor of the community.

"In a nutshell, Mosaics are looking for an authentic experience with God and other people," explained Barna. "Teenagers patronize churches and other event-oriented organizations because they are seeking a compelling experience that is made complete and safe by the presence of people they know and trust, and from whom they are willing to learn and take their cues. Music and other ambient factors may attract them once or twice, but those elements will not keep them coming back for more. There has to be sufficient substance, quality, hope, and genuine mutual concern and acceptance for them to return."

### Mosaics' Impact on the Culture

The youngest generation is already starting to make waves in our culture in areas ranging from music and lan-

Continued on page 6

# The 7 Deadly Sins of Inviting Volunteers

by Jonathan & Thomas McKee

Adult leaders are the lifeblood of every thriving youth ministry. Here's a primer on the dos and don'ts of snagging great volunteers.

## **Sin #1:** **Expect announcements to get volunteers.**

Most people don't want to volunteer—they want to be asked. Don't use volunteer as a verb—stop looking for someone “to volunteer.” That means they must contact you to serve. People hate doing that. So make volunteer a noun. Look for someone to commit (that's the verb) as a volunteer (the noun). When you recruit, focus on personal invitations.

## **Sin #2:** **Go It Alone.**

Put together a special inviting task force that operates like a nominating committee. The key element is to brainstorm about people who could fit the roles you need.

## **Sin #3:** **Recruit Only Volunteers Who Make Long-Term Commitments.**

Just remember that short-term projects provide excellent “first dates”—they're how you find your long-term volunteers. Short-term volunteers have the opportunity to catch your ministry's vision as they work alongside a passionate leader.

## **Sin #4:** **Assume That “No” Means “Never.”**

Sometimes a “no” means that a prospect would rather do something other than the role you've described. Probe to find out what the person likes to do, then see if there's a match for that in your (or someone else's) ministry.

## **Sin #5:** **Recruit Any Ol' B.I.C.**

As leaders, it's easy to get sucked into the B.I.C. syndrome—a “Butt In the Chair.” We desperately need a volunteer, so we plead our case to anyone with a pulse. First determine what specific skills you need, then go and find the people with those skills who best meet your needs.

## **Sin #6:** **Ask Busy People to Do Busy Work.**

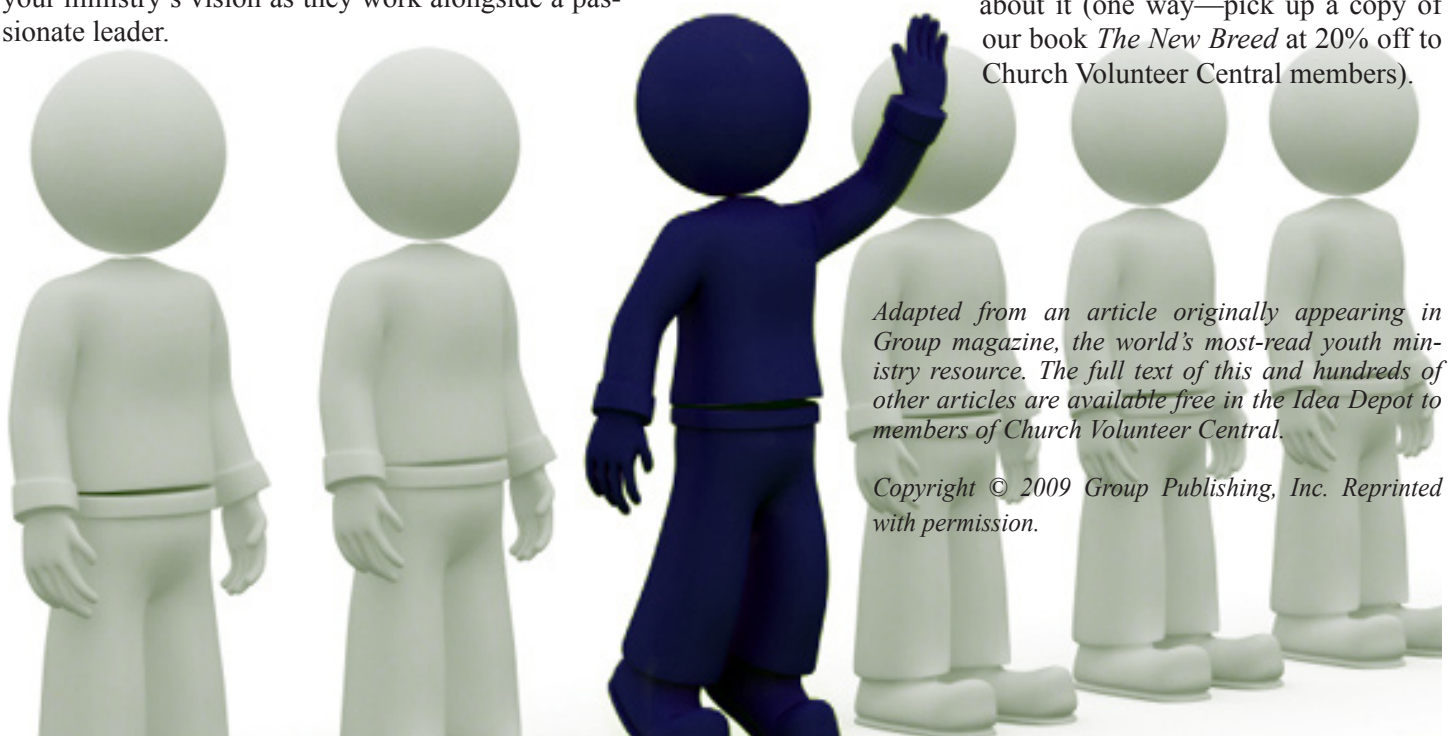
Of course, we do need some people to do busywork. But long-term volunteers like to be recruited for things that tap into their expertise, not for their B.I.C.

## **Sin #7:** **Remain Ignorant About Volunteer Leadership.**

If your training, education, and experience have not prepared you to be a volunteer manager, it's time to get proactive about it (one way—pick up a copy of our book *The New Breed* at 20% off to Church Volunteer Central members).

*Adapted from an article originally appearing in Group magazine, the world's most-read youth ministry resource. The full text of this and hundreds of other articles are available free in the Idea Depot to members of Church Volunteer Central.*

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## Part 4 Survey Says . . .

In the last three issues of REACH! we shared survey responses from 117 WELS pastors and youth leaders. In this issue we continue by sharing their responses to this question:

### Survey question

**“What do you feel are the top three things a youth worker needs to know about teens?”**

*(Some of the best answers follow.)*

- To reach them, you need to ENGAGE them. It may take time for some to trust that you have their best interest in mind. Your persistence, consistency and presence with them over time will serve you well.
- Teens are real people with real issues. Teens want someone to listen to them and show that they value them. Teens want someone to look up to as a role model, even if they don't act like it.
- Teens want people to try to understand them. Realize they have a tough time always deciding things and would like some help. Just because they look different doesn't mean they are bad.
- They need the gospel. They need to be treated as adults in the church. They need to be given substance not fluff programs.
- They want to fit in – not stand out or have attention drawn to them in an embarrassing way – “under the radar” – so to speak. They are extremely SOCIAL! They are very sensitive.
- Teens are intelligent people who know Christ. Teens WANT independence and will test the boundaries of acceptable behavior in order to gain that independence. Many teens are very, very busy and need to have their schedules respected.
- They don't always know what they want and are looking for direction that helps them figure it out, not someone to do it for them. They like to be able to depend on someone whom they respect. Their friendships with peers dominate their life.
- Christian teens are saints and sinners. They are seeking direction but don't always follow. They have talents that they don't always know how to use for the good of the kingdom.
- Relationship is incredibly important to teens. It's important for the vicar to make the first step - seek them out - to get to know them, but individually; they are not likely to make the first move. Stay in touch with high school. Teens would like the vicar to not forget what high school was like. Be consistent and reliable, and admit shortcomings. Be real! Understand “group mentality.” For activities, involvement is closely tied to who is going - if none of their friends/buddies are going - they are less likely to go. Teens are always looking for the better option - so if something better comes up, the youth group activity will get the backseat.
- You want to communicate with your teens, but don't confuse communication with trying to be their buddy. They need a spiritual mentor not a buddy. They are inundated with materialism at every level. Many teens don't have parents that take absolute stands in reference to God's Word. Consequently, many teens can jump ship on many issues.
- They are immersed in a culture that is secular, or even worse, antagonistic to Christ. They need a safe place where they can open up and share their questions (they need to be able to ask questions and get serious answers), their struggles, hopes, fears. They have an awful lot of potential if adults just give them a chance!
- They are sinners. While the temptations they face may be different than other ages, they are still effected by the same sin. They are not sinners because they do sinful things; they do sinful things because they are sinners. They are redeemed by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They are holy and blameless in God's eyes. This atonement, this righteousness, this salvation is theirs through Word and Sacraments. Cling to these at all costs.
- Teens are people, too. Whoever gives the time gets their heart. Don't be afraid to challenge them to learn more.

# Everyday Encouragement

by Mark Heckendorf, teacher and coach  
Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School – Jackson, WI

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

Joshua 1:8-9

Joshua sure had his hands full. Moses, the legend, had just died and now Joshua was to lead an entire nation into unfamiliar territory. He didn't know quite what to expect, except that it would be challenging. Fear and uncertainty are just some of the emotions that played havoc within Joshua's heart and mind.

Can you relate to Joshua's plight? I believe that our youth today can especially relate to the emotions Joshua was experiencing. How about a typical high school student? They either have their own high expectations or expectations placed upon them by parents, teachers, and society. They perhaps have the fear of fitting in and making friends. They want to be popular and liked. They have so many life changing decisions to make which add to their high stress levels already. There is the fear of the unknown and the future. What is going to happen? How will I make it? Am I prepared? The list of questions could go on and on.

The words the Lord spoke to Joshua are some excellent words of advice to our youth today. Look at the words from Joshua 1:8-9. The Lord instructs us all to meditate on His Word – EVERY DAY! We will find our strength and courage in His Word! We don't have to be terrified or discouraged, because God will be with us wherever we go!

EVERY DAY...meditate on God's Word. As a high school religion teacher, I have the privilege to share that Word with students. I'm constantly stressing to them the importance of

their personal relationship with God. In this age of techno-savvy teens, there are a variety of ways to get into the Word. One tool that I use is the *EVERYDAY* video series produced by WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD).

In my religion classes, we use Thursdays as a day we call "Reflections." At the beginning of the class period I will post a topic or have them watch a short video clip on a particular subject, and then they must reflect on it in the light



of Scripture. This is where I make use of the *EVERYDAY* videos. These videos get the students' attention and begin to spark some wonderful dialogue. They give the students an opportunity to openly talk about some difficult topics. Sometimes I may divide the students into small groups. Sometimes we just start reflecting on the video and their

reactions to it. The videos speak for themselves and really aid in bringing up topics which our teens need to hear and discuss.

I'm a firm believer that we need to teach our teens how to apply the Word of God to their lives. The Bible is not just a book to be opened only in a religion class. Rather, we need to instill in them that it is God's very precious words which He gives us as His tool to apply to everyday challenges. These videos are a wonderful tool to help our teens (and all of us) in our walk with God. They are also a great reminder to recall the words spoken to Joshua – "...the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." I encourage you to make use of the *EVERYDAY* videos in helping the youth of today stay connected to our Lord.

guage to sexual patterns and educational commitment. For instance, recent research by the Barna Research Group indicates that Mosaics will baffle their elders by exhibiting comfort with contradictions related to spirituality, family, career development, morality, and politics. The youngest generation will also energetically pursue spiritual insights, although they are less likely than preceding age cohorts to feel constrained by traditional theological parameters. Mosaics will continue the Buster tradition of prioritizing personal relationships; although they will not place as high a premium on those relationships as do their teen predecessors.

Sadly, Mosaics are also likely to gain the reputation for being the most information-overloaded group ever. The development and acceptance of new technologies over the course of the next decade will challenge the ability of these young adults to process the mountains of data and constant psychological stimuli.

The studies conducted by Barna Research found that one element common to almost all teenagers, whether they fall within the tail end of the Buster generation or the front end of the Mosaics, is both curiosity and concern regarding their future. Nine out of ten teenagers think about their future every week. However, only three out of ten feel they are very well prepared for that future.

### What's Your Take?

Now that you know a bit more about the age demographic you are serving, reflect on the questions that follow. If you have fellow youth ministers/leaders in your congregation, discuss the questions together. Possible answers will be shared in the next issue of *REACH!*.

1. What value is there in considering this information about the Mosaic generation?
2. As you ponder your ministry to Mosaics, what about their characteristics creates concern for you? What creates excitement in you?
3. How are you like the information presented? How are you unlike the information presented?
4. What from your own background/upbringing could help you in a ministry to Mosaics? What could hurt you in a ministry to Mosaics?

The above is an adaptation and compilation of information from the following two sources:

- **Wikipedia:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic\\_Generation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic_Generation)

- **Barna Updates – Teens:** <http://www.barna.org/>

?searchkey=teens&Page=Results&Search.x=4&Search.y=7

### Others React to the Everyday Video Series:

"The *Everyday* videos are a welcome addition to my Junior High Friday Night gathering. The youth really connect with the situations presented and I have an instant discussion starter. And that means a lot since 90% of attendees are prospects with very little Bible knowledge or background! Thank you to all who are involved with the production of these videos! They are phenomenal! As soon as I pull out the laptop, the kids are asking: "What are we going to watch today?" In other words, I have their attention.

Staff Minister Kevin Walker  
– Mississauga, Ontario

"These videos are awesome! The kids can't help but get the message."

Vicar Frederic Berger  
– Mississauga, Ontario

"Our youth group begins meetings with a brief devotional study. The *Everyday* videos are perfect for that setting. We project them on a screen so everyone can see them. The video format keeps their attention. The engaging topics give them plenty to think about. A few questions prepared in advance keep the discussion going smoothly. Thanks for providing this useful tool!"

Pastor Ray Schumacher  
– Johnson Creek, WI

Everyday videos are posted at [www.livingbold.net](http://www.livingbold.net) and [streams.wels.net](http://streams.wels.net) in the video section under "Inspiration."

Is your youth group/youth ministry doing something that would benefit others if they learned about it?  
Send your story to *REACH!* [cyd@sab.wels.net](mailto:cyd@sab.wels.net)

**Please contact us with any questions or for further information.**

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