

# 5 key steps to engage your youth ministry

No fluff, good stuff!  
Tactics for discipling  
a digital generation.

VOKE

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# Remember that powerful blue serum?

Have you ever seen *Captain America: The First Avenger*?

If not, you totally should. And if so, do you remember the reason why Dr. Abraham chose Steve Rogers to be the first super soldier?

When preparing him to receive the experimental, blue serum soon to be coursing through Steve's veins, Dr. Abraham said, "The serum amplifies everything that is inside. So, good becomes great. Bad becomes worse."

Digital spaces are simply Dr. Abraham's blue serum. It amplifies everything inside human nature. That's why bad character appears worse, and why good stories become great movements.

*As youth leaders, we should help our students use digital spaces to make good things great. If we are discipling them to be sensitive to the heart of God offline and showing them how to share His love online, then the Good News they know can be a great thing others are searching to know.*

Your effectiveness in youth ministry will be shaped by how you engage with your students digitally, because their digital engagement is already shaping them.

This guide is meant to give you no fluff, good stuff tactics for engaging your youth ministry so you can seize these possibilities.

So let's put these tactics to work so we can seize this blue serum and empower our youth to make good things great in their generation.

Together with you,  
Raeli, Voke Community Director 😊

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# Inspire Creativity

Digital spaces, like social media, are sustained by basic social principles.

- They want you to be consistent
- They want you to connect with people who share your interests
- They want you to encourage and interact with those people

Simple, right?

What this means is what you promote on social media, you permit.

Actions such as liking, commenting, sharing and saving posts tell the algorithms running the platforms that this is what is meaningful to you and to those around you, so they're going to permit more content just like it.

So, if you want your students to engage with wholesome content, then start promoting wholesome content. Create videos that inspire spiritual conversations. Share posts that promote discipleship. Follow and comment on other pastor's and teacher's posts that inspire godly living. Then, as your students begin to interact with the posts you promote, it will start to fill their feeds with good content that will shape the digital world they engage with.

Below are some simple ideas to help you get started.

# NO. 1

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## TikTok Tuesdays

Every Tuesday, give your students a creative prompt for a TikTok video.

These prompts can be shaped by the series you're going through together, or by relevant events happening in your ministry.

They can be funny prompts like "Mission Trip Moments" or "Summer Camp Culture." Or they could be focused on gospel topics such as "Love Is:" or "Jesus Said..." Then, provide a reward for best video at your next gathering. This creates a shared experience for your students, and invites students outside of your normal gathering to get a different view of church. And, it empowers them to truly consider elements of their faith as they seek clever ways to share about Jesus.

## Instagram Wallpapers

The Instagram algorithm sees shares and saves as meaningful actions. With that in mind, ask yourself, "What content is visually stunning that my students will want to save and share?"

Here's a hint: wallpapers 😊

Every week, create a wallpaper and share it on your Instagram Story. You can base it on a Bible verse you will be focusing on that week, or a quote you feel can encourage your students. Then, ask them to share it and tag you in their story so others can be encouraged as well.

You could even kick it up a notch by challenging them to create wallpapers based off of their notes or what they learned that week at your gathering. This is another avenue to get your students thinking critically about their faith, because in order to create, they have to reflect and apply.

If you're thinking, "Cool, but I'm not a designer." No worries. On our blog we talk about [5 Apps for Youth Leaders in 2020](#), which details a free app you can use for simple and stunning design (thank you, templates!).

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# Give Clarity

In Barna's newest study, *The Connected Generation*, they were shocked to find that **50%** of those with some connection to Christianity believe that the church cannot answer their questions.

But, they are still willing to ask them.

For those who find clarity in their beliefs, the study revealed that "18–35-year-olds around the world are somewhat surprisingly faith-friendly, if not faithful... The majority of respondents, and especially those who engage meaningfully with their faith, espouses the benefits of religion, both for individuals and society" (Key Findings, *The Connected Generation*).

***We need to engage our youth ministries in real conversations around their questions about faith and following Jesus.***

But, can I admit, this can be truly intimidating. In my experience working with youth ministries, students carry this perception that everyone who follows Jesus is doubt-less. That's why we love the story of Thomas in the *Voke Adventures*, because it addresses this issue head on. There is power in doubt, as it can develop intimacy in your relationship with Jesus if you're willing to hang on.

So how can we invite them to be an active voice in these potentially intimidating conversations?

# NO. 2

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## Q / A Nights

Once a month after your main lesson, host a Q/A night.

- Invite a couple of leaders or volunteers you trust onto the platform to form your panel.
- If you have a screen, put the names and phone numbers of your panel on a slide for everyone to see.
- Encourage your students to text in any questions related to faith, following Jesus, or living for Him in everyday life. It will be totally anonymous, and you'll be able to filter the questions.
- Spend the next 15-20 minutes answering their questions by pointing them to the solution in the Word.

I have personally seen Q/A Nights work WONDERS. My student ministry is a kaleidoscope of spiritual development and biblical understanding; they each come from a unique place in their walk with Christ, which means their questions are just as uniquely specific.

Q/A Nights invite them to ask their questions and helps you learn where they are and what they're wrestling with. It also helps them build trust with their youth leaders, and give them the clarity they need to engage meaningfully in their relationships with Jesus.

# NO. 2.

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# Build Conviction

GenZ have their beliefs. But not many hold fast to any convictions.

Convictions not only found our faith, but shape our identity. Without convictions, this generation will be left to wonder who they are, what their purpose is, and how the decisions they make will affect their callings.

Clarity in their convictions gives them the confidence they need to live out their faith and share it with others.

As youth leaders, we are entrusted with helping this generation form their convictions at the same time they are forming their identities. So as they grow and enter into their next stage of life, they can have solid footing as their faith is challenged and stretched in new environments.

A belief is only transformed into a conviction by the power of the Holy Spirit. Typically this happens when you make the choice to express what has been impressed on your heart -- basically, when you practice what you preach.

So how can you engage your youth ministry in this way?

## Testimony Time

One powerful way to help your students develop convictions is by sharing testimonies. Testimonies are evidence of beliefs transformed into convictions through personal experiences.

As students hear the testimonies of others, convictions can be sparked. But if you challenge a student to tell their own testimony, they will have to reflect on the work God has done in their life, and become more intentional in seeing what He is doing through them in the days to come.

Encourage them to use IGTV to make and share the videos. If they feel like there is purpose in encouraging and empowering those around them, then they will find the willingness to share their story with others.

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# Develop Confidence

If you haven't noticed, which I'm sure you have, this generation loves to figure things out independently.

They are natural innovators, born into an era of creativity and a culture of curiosity. Exploration doesn't have to be encouraged, because it is implied.

They're a tribe of success seekers. They are globally connected, sensitive to the pulse of every nuance under the scroll of their thumbs. But the combination of being a success-seeking soul connected to every crack in a fragile world leads to a collision of insecurity, creating the worst mental health crisis of anxiety and depression the world has ever seen.

According to Barna's study, only 1 in 3 GenZ feel like someone believes in them. But we can change this.

## Voke Adventures

One powerful way to help your students develop confidence is by encouraging them to go on a Voke Adventure.

By leveraging the power of media, Voke Adventures help give your students the clarity, conviction and confidence they need to grow and own their faith.

Imagine an original streaming service series attached to direct messaging, and that's how a Voke Adventure works. Each Adventure unpacks the core convictions of Christianity in a way that's relatable to students' understanding. Then, the videos lead into a question that helps the student start and sustain spiritual conversations, which deepens their convictions and creates clarity in their beliefs.

By encouraging a student to start a Voke Adventure with a friend, it will help them build the confidence they need to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, and it communicates to them that you believe in them enough to push them toward their potential.



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# Grow Community

One of the most powerful ways to engage your youth ministry is goodwill in the context of community.

This generation is fiery about sharing kindness, taking care of the planet, and giving justice to those oppressed globally. And it's best when they go after these things together.

Can I get a hallelujah for these godly careabouts?! ☐

So how can we engage our youth ministries in these acts of goodwill that grow community?

## Share a Coffee

Nothing communicates "I care" more than someone paying for your coffee. And thanks to digital technology, this has never been easier.

- Using the Starbucks Rewards app, pick a giftcard in the Gifts tab.
- Load the card with your desired amount (\$25 should do the trick).
- Add your email as the recipient of the giftcard.
- Once you open the giftcard in your inbox, click "Redeem Your Gift."
- Screenshot the barcode after it pops up.
- Share this screenshot on your Instagram Story or Feed.
- Encourage people to use it to pay for one drink, or load more money onto the card so they can bless others.

This is a simple way to engage your youth ministry using digital spaces. It shows them how to navigate the space in a godly way that can inspire others to experience His love and get to know Him better.

# NO. 5

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# Your 5 Step Checklist to Engage Your Youth Ministry

1

Inspire Creativity - Using tactics such as TikTok Tuesdays or Instagram Wallpapers can inspire your students to think creatively about their faith.

2

Give Clarity - Your students have questions, so give them an opportunity to ask them. Q/A Nights give both students and leaders insight into how to live for Jesus everyday.

3

Build Conviction - Testimonies are a powerful way to help your students build conviction. As they craft their testimonies, they can become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit at work in them.

4

Develop Confidence - GenZ is creative and wants to feel believed in. Empower them to lead a friend through a Voke Adventure and watch them develop confidence as they go.

5

Grow Community - Goodwill speaks loudest to this generation. Share some coffee with others using the Starbucks app to express the love of Jesus to a world searching to know His love.



# Raeli Smith

Raeli Smith is the Community and Content Digital Strategist for Jesus Film Project. Her heart is captivated by Jesus, fulfilled in serving ministry leaders, and satisfied with a quality cup of coffee.

She studied Writing and Rhetoric, with a double minor in Nonprofit Management and Advertising/Public Relations, at the University of Central Florida.

And uses every ounce of it to help this generation find passion and confidence in following Christ. Get to know Raeli on Instagram.

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