

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FAITH COMMUNITIES



Learning Ministries Day
Cherryville, PA
April 18, 2015

Facilitated by Debbie Streicher

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FAITH COMMUNITIES

Welcome and Intro



What sparked your
interest
in this workshop?

Empowering Children and Youth in Faith Communities

What would it take for your faith community to become a place young people described as *essential, exciting, inspiring, and empowering*?

How do we create *relevant, meaningful, and engaging spiritual experiences* with children and youth?

We will explore these questions and possibilities for partnering in ministry with young people. Together we will explore practices for *recognizing and nurturing children's innate spiritual gifts*, listening to and learning from the wisdom of children, and reflectively *assess our own local ministry setting*.

Through discussion, we will explore spirituality from the perspective of children and youth and to *reawaken our own inner childlike spirituality of creativity, awe, and wonder*.

The Importance of Spiritual Gifts:

There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1 Cor. 12:4-5

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Pet. 4:10

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

Romans 12:4-6a

DEBBIE STREICHER

Springfield, VA

Age 50



PLACE PROFILE

PERSONALITY: I/D

GIFTS: Leadership and Exhortation

ABILITIES: Social and Enterprising

PASSION: Displays by Leading, Challenging, and Delegating. Demonstrates toward ministers, parents, and youth

EXPERIENCES: Living overseas in different countries; receiving leadership awards; being invited to work in the church

I have always risen to become the leader of something. Early on it was apparent others noticed this gift. During my senior year in high school I received a leadership award. I wondered why I was chosen over 200 other kids. When I was accepting the award, I kept thinking that I would have to come back and explain to this school that I was worthy of such an honor.

My confidence level before PLACE wasn't high at all. Until the workshop, I did not see leadership as a God-given spiritual gift. Afterwards, I hung that all up. I said, "OK God, I accept this as my gift," and I have grown from there. I told God, "You were there all along. Let me say I am here now."

PLACE has validated for me that no matter what place someone has in the church, they are a valuable part of the body of Christ. Everyone is essential in making that body function. In addition to making us aware of ourselves, PLACE helps us recognize and understand that each person has a gift. We need to help people discover those gifts so they are happy—so they know they are valuable in God's eyes.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16



Have you taken a Spiritual Gifts assessment?

If so, what is your gift/gifts? If not, why not?

And where have you connected your gift/gifts with your ministry?

Spiritual Gifts for Adults

<http://buildingchurch.net/g2s-d.htm>

PLACE:

<http://www.placeministries.org/>

SHAPE

<http://www.saddlebackresources.com/SHAPE-C156.aspx>

Life Keys

<http://www.amazon.com/LifeKeys-Discovery-Workbook-Discover-Who/dp/0764200763>

Everybody Has a Part

<http://mintools.com/>

WELCA

<http://www.womenofthelca.org/resource---gifts-for-you-news-28.php>

Neal Boese

<http://www.amazon.com/Spiritual-Gifts-Power-Drives-Congregation/dp/0788006150>

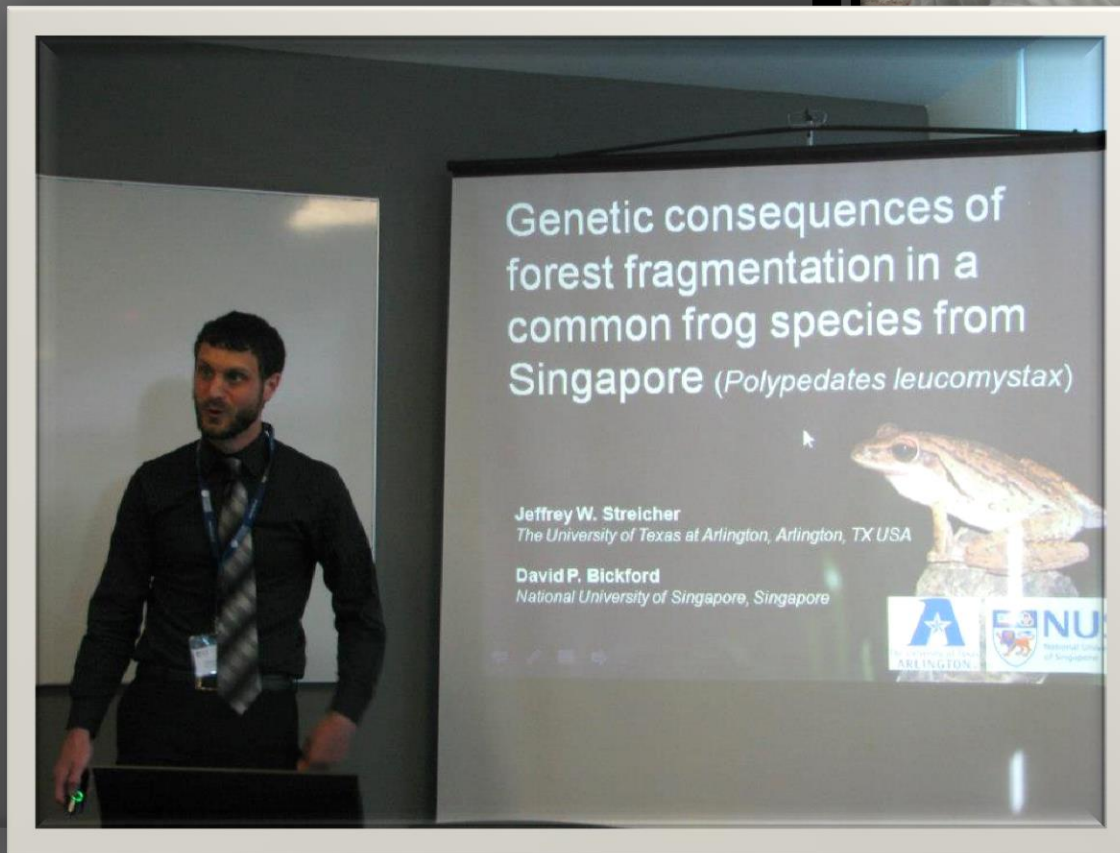
Why target children and how do we reach others in the congregation?

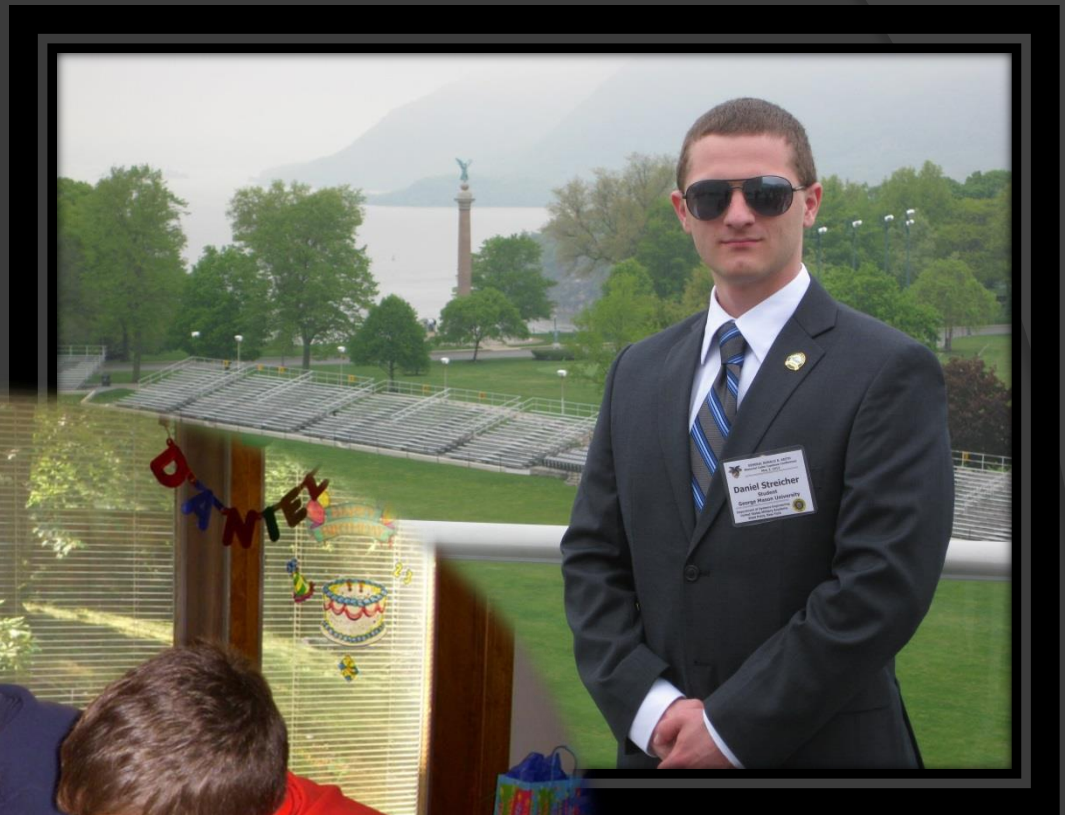
"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6

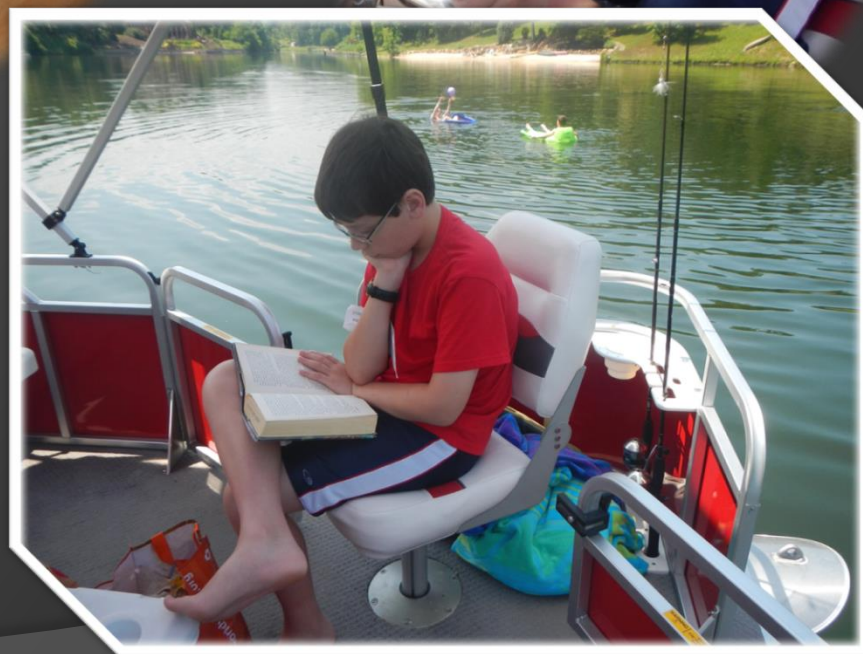


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ot6lhR2SX4k>

Children and their gifts...







Children with Spiritual Gifts

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laOPZZb7ndo>

Fr. Mark Bozada discusses spiritual phenomena and the overwhelming interest in spirits, angels and apparitions. As a child he had many spiritual gifts and believes that many children today have the same gifts but parents are quick to dismiss them.

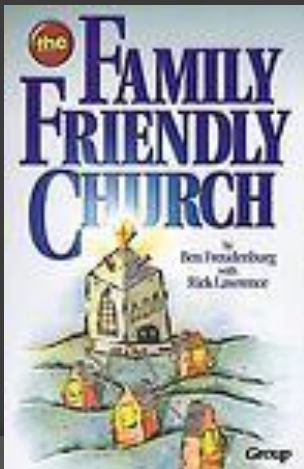
Reflect on your own family or a child you know well in your congregation.

What gift have you noticed God has given them?

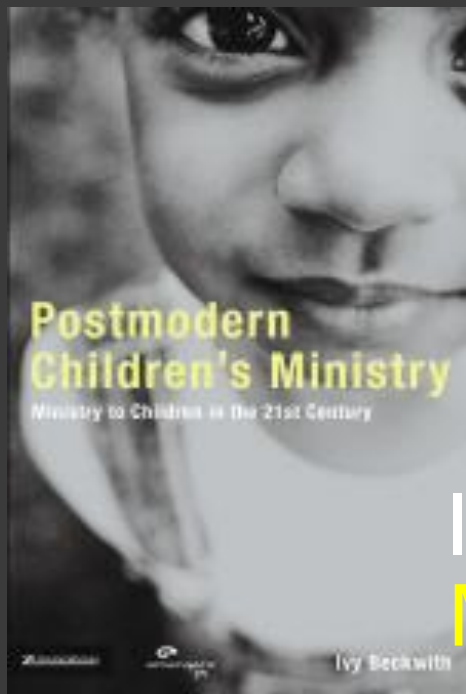
Where and how in the congregation can you or have you empowered that gift?



“Parents are the key faith developers for their children – they can have either a positive or a negative impact on their kid’s faith growth. But either way, they’ll have the biggest impact. You can have strong faith-shaping programs for kids at church, but if you’re not partnering with homes, you risk producing kids who have weak faith.”



**The Family Friendly Church
By Ben Freudenburg**



In the book **Postmodern Children's Ministry**, author Ivy Beckwith states *“A church program can't spiritually form a child, but a family living in an intergenerational community of faith can. Our care for our children is broken and badly in need of repair.”*

Children and Youth and Ministry Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts

Lifelong Faith Journal

<http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>

Transforming Spiritual Champions

<http://www.amazon.com/Transforming-Children-Into-Spiritual-Champions/dp/0830732934>

PLACE for Youth

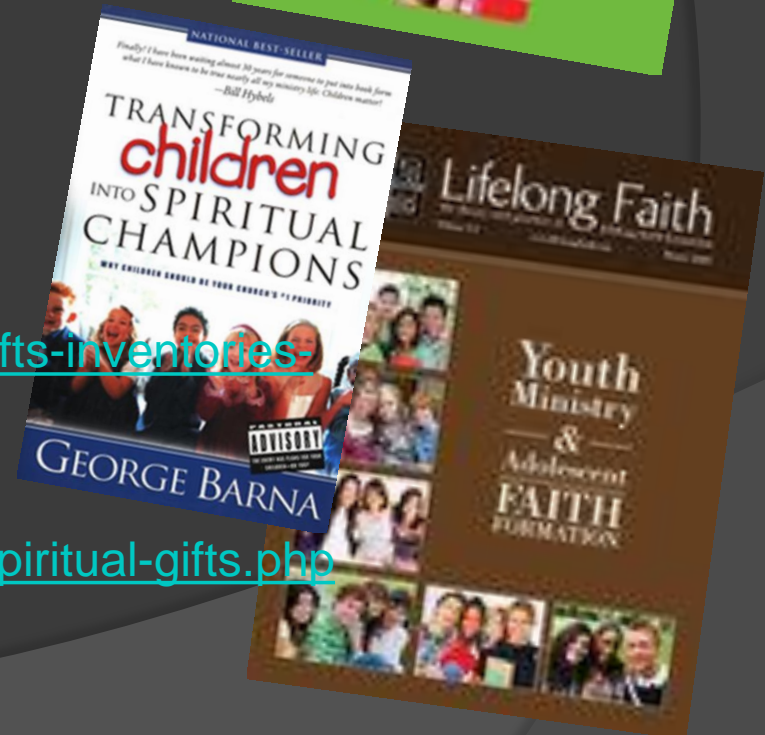
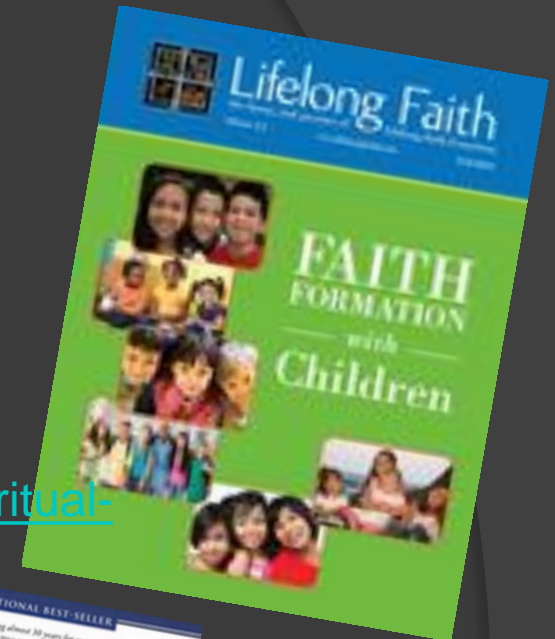
<http://www.placeministries.org/>

Spiritual Gifts for Children

<http://childrensministry.com/articles/spiritual-gifts-inventories-for-preteens>

Kids Spiritual Gifts

<http://www.kidssundayschool.com/170/topic/spiritual-gifts.php>



Reflection on youth answers. The youth were asked to tell us some ways that they would like to see the church change. Here are some of the things they said:

- Be more active as the church in the community
- Do more for “Red Ribbon Week” and drug awareness
- Participate in Relay for Life
- Do more food drives
- Do a candy drive for the troops for Halloween
- Do more about Breast Cancer Awareness
- Be more accepting of all types of people regardless of race or gender
- Have more varieties of music that is sacred in nature, but relates to the younger generation

These answers are all action related.
Are they tied to gifts also?

Sermon Notes:

When we listen to the hopes, dreams and suggestions of the younger generations, this is what we hear. We want the church to be active in our community. We want our faith to have feet and hands. Talking on Sunday morning cannot be all there is. Bring in and welcome those who are on the margins. Put some “skin in the game.”

How do we help youth put “skin in the game” ?
(empower/excite/energize)



What gifts were nurtured in you?

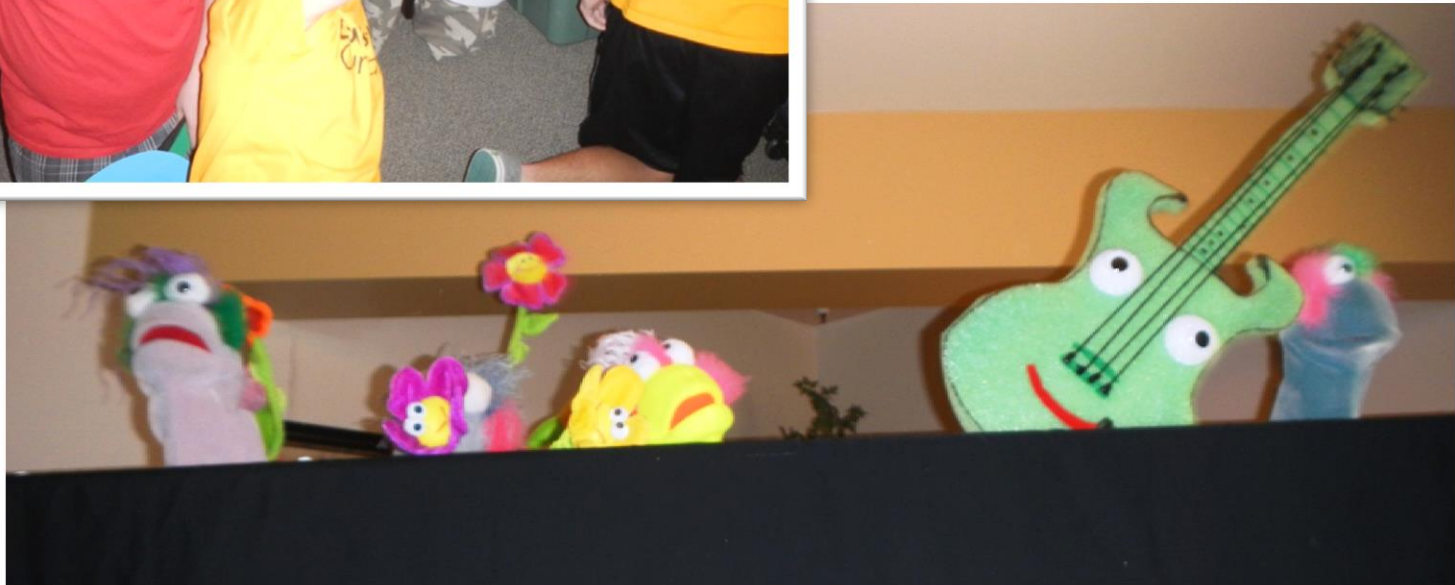
Think of your own childhood. What did you enjoy most and never tire of doing?

Where did your gifts intersect with something you did in the congregation?

Something you did at home or at school?



A Place to Energize and Empower...



How realistic is it that we can equip homes for faith formation and spiritual growth?



Debbie's 3 Tips for Leadership

Be Intentional



Set Expectations



Plan for
Accountability



Making Disciples: From the Fish Bowl to the Ocean Approach

Debbie Streicher

(Vibrant Faith Ministries, Faith Formation Learning Exchange.net)

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20, NIV)

Jesus called the disciples by inviting them one or two at a time and met them where they were in their lives. In order to "fish for people," we need to know a little more about the fish and where they live and learn how to go about catching them. There is always the question, "What happens after we catch them?"

A.K. Best, a respected name in fly fishing, once said, "The fishing was good; it was the catching that was bad." I believe this quotation points out a very common struggle in ministry today. The "fishing" is good in the congregation. People are coming in the doors and they seem to be engaged in ministry, but when we begin to dig a little deeper into the spiritual lives of the people, it appears we haven't been "catching" them at all. If we can't "catch" them, the fish in our own tank, how do we think we can reach out to others and go beyond the church walls?

As I began to think about Jesus calling the disciples and his stories about fish and fishing, I thought about the analogy of my own experiences as a fisherman but soon turned my thoughts to where the fish live. And then reflected more on providing a home for the fish rather than "catching" them. As a result, I have outlined an approach with a vision to move our fish from the fish bowl to the ocean.

The Spiritual Gift Connection

God has given each Christian two vitally important gifts. The first is the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his work of redemption, and thus forgiveness of sin. The second is the gift of one or more special abilities, which are to be used for the purpose of unifying the body of Christ and for the growth of God's Kingdom. These abilities are called spiritual gifts and they are received through our baptism. Like other presents, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our spiritual gifts until they have been opened. (Neal Boese and Patricia Haller)

For most of us, our faith journey began in our home or in a congregation when we first went to Christian education classes. In most places it was called Sunday school. If we were fortunate, we had adults in our lives who modeled the importance of Bible study and prayer. If you are reading this, there is a good chance that somehow, somewhere in your life, an adult felt it was important

Let's talk about your present setting in the congregation:

What does Children and Youth Ministry look like?

Has there ever been an intentionality to identify or talk with adults about the children and youth gifts?

What is a first step you can take to begin to unwrap the gifts you have in your congregation and empower them?



How will you.....?

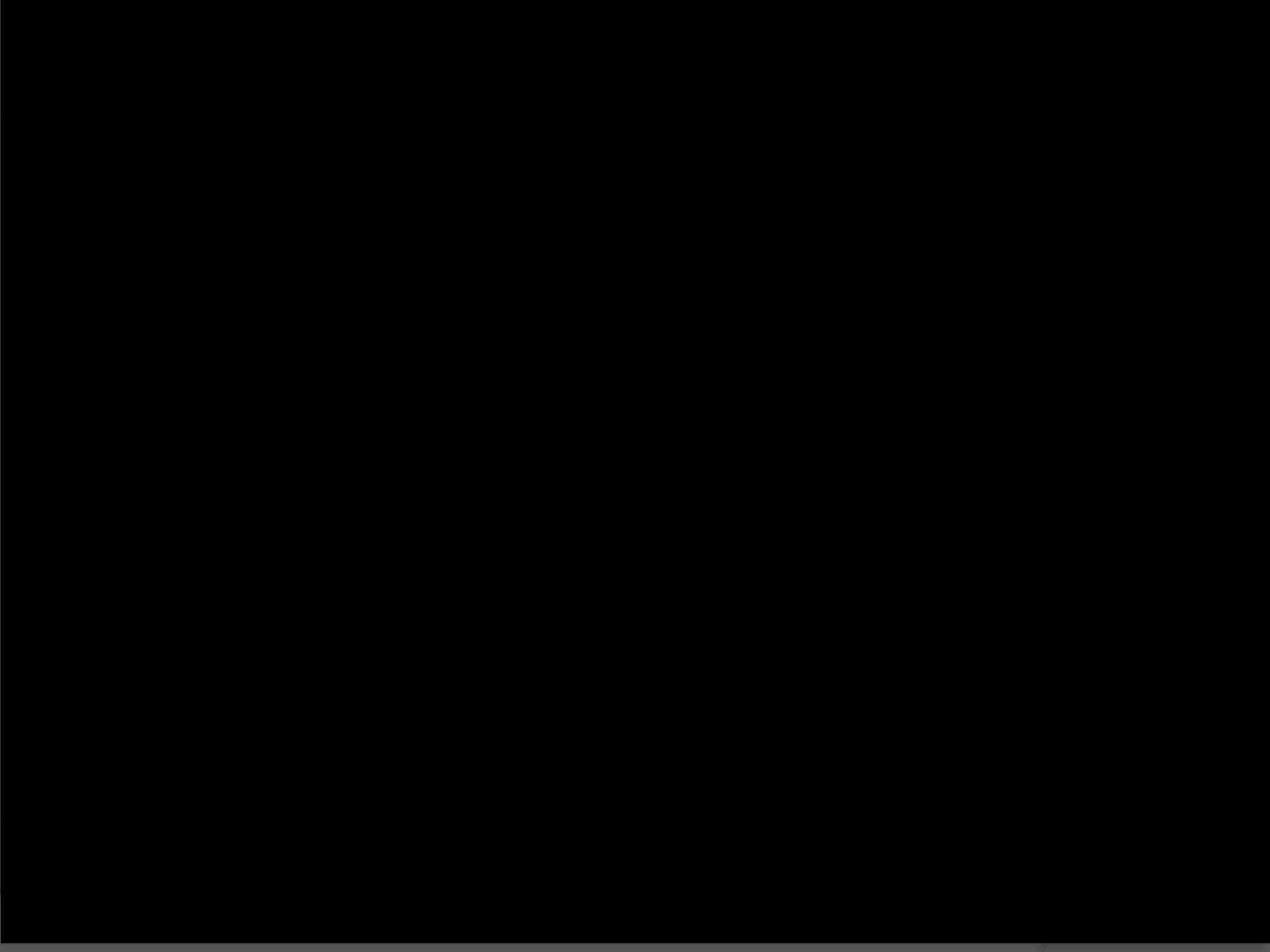
Be Intentional



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We get 40 on average of weeks a year with children and youth in our faith community.



What can we possibly do to make a difference in the lives of our children and youth?

What will be our next step?

Closing Prayer

Think of your congregation.

Picture a child or youth you thought about today while we pray.

