

STAR Series

For Congregational Leaders

COMPASSION



COMPETENCY: Picture a stressed college student during finals week—overwhelmed, exhausted, running on empty. Then a roommate appears with warm chocolate chip cookies. For one moment, the stress lifts. That's **compassion**: presence, empathy in action, and the simple message of "I see you." For congregational leaders working with young adults, these small acts of compassion can transform how this generation experiences church community.

Three Pillars of Compassionate Leadership

1 PRACTICE COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

Real compassion asks, "What's really going on here?" Move beyond the automatic "How are you?" that always gets "fine" as a response. Instead, try specific questions: "What's been energizing you lately?" or "What's been the hardest part of this week?" Reference past conversations to show you remember and care. Research shows young adults who feel truly heard are twice as likely to remain engaged in a community. Curiosity isn't just polite—it's the doorway to trust.



2 MOVE AT THEIR PACE

Young adults often feel life rushing around them, with expectations moving faster than they can keep up. Compassion looks like patience—slowing down and walking alongside rather than sprinting ahead. Offer low-barrier opportunities before expecting big commitments: casual coffee instead of committee meetings, a few hours of volunteering rather than months-long projects. Remember that engagement doesn't always mean hosting or leading. For some, feeling accepted for who they are is enough.

3 BUILD BELONGING

Even one close friend in a community makes a huge difference in whether someone stays. Cultivate belonging by celebrating small wins, remembering life details, and publicly recognizing contributions. Ask "What do you think?" to create space for different voices. Host collaborative experiences like service projects. One meaningful connection can turn casual attendees into active participants and loyal community members.

Compassion doesn't have to be huge—a text message, a genuine question, or yes, even cookies. Small acts change how young adults experience your church, building the kind of compassionate environment that transforms lives.

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ROADMAP

Curriculum Domain, Competency and Task Constellations

STAR Domain:	Listening
Associated Competency:	Relationship building and Compassion
Associated Task:	Equanimity
STAR Domain:	Young Adult Leadership
Associated Competency:	Resourcefulness and Communication
Associated Task:	Recruiting
STAR Domain:	Faith Journey
Associated Competency:	Creating Trust
Associated Task:	Spiritual formation
STAR Domain:	Culture
Associated Competency:	Adaptability
Associated Task:	Embracing failure
STAR Domain:	Intergenerational Connections
Associated Competency:	Mentorship
Associated Task:	Generational literacy and Digital literacy
STAR Domain:	Community
Associated Competency:	Authenticity and Inclusivity
Associated Task:	Managing conflict
STAR Domain:	Church Leadership
Associated Competency:	Influence and Purpose
Associated Task:	Creating buy-in
STAR Domain:	Frameworks, Programs, & Events
Associated Competency:	Learning
Associated Task:	Sticky programs and Measure and assess



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FOR YOUNG
ADULT MINISTRY