

STAR Series

For Congregational Leaders

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

COMPETENCY: For Young adults navigating digital fatigue, mental health challenges, and constant life transitions—creating authentic connections requires churches to move beyond events toward genuine relational ministry. This generation craves real **relationship building** but faces unique barriers that previous generations didn't encounter.

Building Bridges in a Digital World

1 UNDERSTANDING UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Young adults face distinct hurdles in building relationships. Despite being hyper-connected online, many feel deeply disconnected in real life, with digital communication failing to fulfill their need for authentic connection. They struggle with higher rates of anxiety and depression, making relationship initiation emotionally taxing. Living in a filtered world creates tension between their deep desire for authenticity and fear of vulnerability. Additionally, their transient lifestyles—marked by frequent moves, remote work, and unstable housing—make building lasting friendships particularly challenging.

2 BE RELATIONAL BEFORE INSTRUCTIONAL

Don't approach young adults primarily as a group needing education or growth. Prioritize friendship and mentorship over teaching. Learn about their passions, culture, and challenges. Celebrate their milestones and support them through difficulties. Young adults engage when they feel known and valued for who they are, not just what they can contribute. Consistency builds trust in their often-disconnected world.

3 CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR AUTHENTIC CONNECTION

Foster environments where questions, doubts, and differing views are welcomed. Model vulnerability by sharing your own struggles and growth experiences. Young adults can spot inauthenticity quickly, so be genuine about your faith journey. Create depth over hype—this generation craves meaningful, raw conversations rather than polished performances.

4 BUILD MICRO-COMMUNITIES WITH SHARED PURPOSE

Launch small groups (4–8 people) based on shared interests or life stages, like Bible and Brunch or Faith and Film nights. Use service opportunities as relational catalysts—shared purpose deepens connection faster than passive social time. Create predictable rhythms like First Friday dinners or Coffee Sundays that offer low-barrier, consistent spaces for connection.



5 EMPOWER PEER LEADERSHIP AND CONNECTION

Give young adults meaningful roles in shaping their community, not just consuming it. Identify natural "connectors" and train them with conversation starters and group facilitation skills. Teach practical friendship skills like conflict resolution and empathy. Celebrate stories of friendship and growth to build a culture that values relationships as spiritual practice.

Remember: relationships aren't built in rows but in circles. Invest in relational ministry to equip young adults for lifelong, meaningful church involvement.

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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:	Enroll: Recruiting
STAR Domain:	Faith Journey
Associated Competency:	Create Trust
Associated Task:	Engagement: Spiritual formation
STAR Domain:	Culture
Associated Competency:	Adaptability
Associated Task:	Engagement: Embracing failure
STAR Domain:	Intergenerational Connections
Associated Competency:	Mentorship
Associated Task:	Engagement: Generational literacy and Digital literacy
STAR Domain:	Community
Associated Competency:	Authenticity and Inclusiveness
Associated Task:	Engagement: Conflict
STAR Domain:	Church Leadership
Associated Competency:	Influence and Purpose
Associated Task:	Enroll: Creating buy-in
STAR Domain:	Frameworks, Programs, & Events
Associated Competency:	Learner
Associated Task:	Engagement: Sticky program design and Measure and assess