

''' Letter from our Young Adult LIFE team



We Are Listening is a proven model built on the experience of over 20 intentional conversations between young adults and Seventh-day Adventist church leaders. What you hold in your hand is meant to be a catalyst for cultural change in your community. Unlike many other young adult ministry resources, this is not another program, but a simple process. We understand that every young adult ministry context is unique, and our team hopes that you will customize this process according to your local needs. We Are Listening has been created from the following principles:

- If the Seventh-day Adventist Church wants to love young adults better, we need to listen more.
- If the Seventh-day Adventist Church wants to give the Gospel the greatest platform for expansion, we must utilize the voices, gifts, talents, and creativity of today's young adult generation.
- If the Seventh-day Adventist Church hopes to thrive as a force for Jesus in the future, we must give young adults a voice, our commitment to change, and a chance to lead for His cause.

This letter and the pages that follow have been immersed in prayer by our Young Adult LIFE team. We have prayed for you, the young adults in your community, and the leadership network you are a part of. We believe that We Are Listening can be an incredible first step on a journey toward loving, reaching, and retaining young adults more effectively in your community.



Getting Started



Ask yourself the three “if” questions above and take a moment to surrender this listening journey to Jesus.

- Do you really want to love young adults better?
- Do you want to give the gospel the greatest chance for expansion?
- Do you want the Seventh-day Adventist Church to thrive in the years to come?

If your answer to these questions is ‘yes’ then you will find this We Are Listening process to be a valuable resource. Here are several tips and suggestions that you will find helpful:

1. Have a real desire to love, reach, and retain young adults more effectively.
2. The most helpful part of We Are Listening is when you begin to build a long-term culture committed to listening, learning, and growing together. Personally commit to engaging in conversation with young adults on a regular basis.
3. Acknowledge that the power in this process comes directly from the presence of the Holy Spirit. Intentionally pray with your team, asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your conversation - weeks before it ever takes place.
4. This short book is designed to be your doodle pad, sticky note, and white board to sketch out your thoughts and ideas. Don’t worry about keeping this book neat and clean.

5. Put effort into creating a relaxing, safe, and uninterrupted environment for your young adults to engage in conversation. Think more of the feeling of somebody’s home, rather than the boardroom at a corporation.
6. Interact with young adults in a way that expresses love, acceptance, and genuine care. Remember the goal is not to change young adults to fit a mold, but to journey with them as you both seek a deeper relationship with Jesus.
7. All of us have preconceived ideas of what this generation is like, what they need, and what they should be doing. As a leader, enter this process with an open heart and mind, wanting to learn and be led by the Holy Spirit.
8. Remember that intentionally listening is only the first step. Action steps must follow. It’s almost worse to listen and do nothing, than to have never had the conversation in the first place.

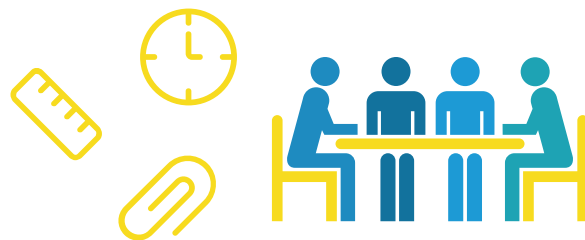
(Conversations for Cultural Change)

The goal of We Are Listening is to serve as a first step in the journey of cultural change to love, reach, and retain young adults more effectively.

In addition to cultural change, sketch out more specific goals that you have for this process.



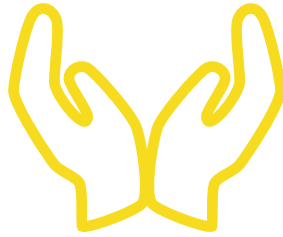
How to Use We Are Listening



There are five segments in this resource. Here is a short outline of each:

- 1. Start with Prayer and Keep Praying**
Ask for God to guide the conversation and, in doing so, activate the catalyst for cultural change to love young adults better.
- 2. Prepare**
The “behind the scenes” aspect of We Are Listening, preparation includes identifying and inviting facilitators and participators and securing the venue. As you continue through this resource, we will give you short instructions and recommendations as you get ready to host your conversation.
- 3. Listen**
The process is described in detail from start to finish.
- 4. Follow-up**
Customizable plan for establishing next steps with facilitators and church leadership – answering the question, “where do we go from here?”
- 5. Take Action**
We have suggested a number of actions steps following up on your conversation.



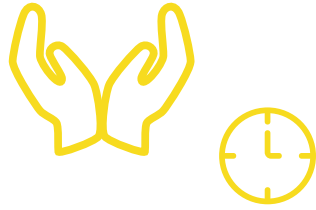


1

Prayer

(IT TAKES TIME AND IT IS
WORTH EVERY SECOND)

Prayer



There is something beautifully mysterious about prayer. If all of us are honest there is a lot to talking with Jesus that we just cannot explain. We don't always know why some prayers get answered, while others may seem to fall on deaf ears. As our team has come together, all of us can say with certainty that even though prayer is a mystery, it works and makes a difference.

One of our team members had the privilege of serving at a local church in youth ministry for over eight years. During that time he witnessed God do incredible things to encourage and change the lives of high school students. Each week the pastoral staff would come together for a meeting on Tuesdays to discuss the business of the church, fine tune programming details, and talk about how to better meet the needs of members. Every staff meeting this team would spend at least half of their time in prayer. Our team member commented that as his journey began at this church, this prayer time seemed like more of a waste of time.

Over the course of the eight-year journey, the team met for hundreds of staff meetings. Now, looking back, every team member involved would agree that it was the intentional effort to pray that allowed Jesus and the Holy Spirit to guide all conversations.

As you hold this resource in your hand, you and your team are about to launch an incredible conversation between church leadership and young adults. We can assure you that spending intentional time praying over this conversation, before it happens, will not be a waste of time.

Our suggestion is, during the weeks leading up to your conversation, pull together your team of leaders and spend time in prayer asking Jesus to prepare your hearts and minds for:

- This learning journey
- To guide your intentional conversation
- To lead participants in a follow-up and next step plan

Core team members that you will be praying with:

When Will You Pray Together?

Date: _____

Time: _____

Venue: _____

Bible Promises: Psalm 32:8/Psalm 25:4-5