

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY

There are lots of single adults

Single adults are everywhere. In many cities, single adults make up at least 40% of the population.

People are single longer

Men and women today often wait until they are almost 30 to get married. That means that many adults will be single and out of their parent's home for about 8 to 10 years.

We can do better

For various reasons, many churches struggle to start and keep a ministry for single adults going. We can do more, and we can do better.

What are some of the emotional, physical and financial needs of single adults?

- They want to have confidence in their career choice
- They want confidence that they have job security with their company
- They want to feel that their job is important, that they are needed
- They want safety where they live and work
- Friends to hang out with, not just on Facebook or texting
- To keep in contact with friends who live in other cities
- Recreation, exercise and entertainment during their free time
- They want a safe place to find appropriate people to date and marry
- Information and experience in dealing with finances, credit, investing
- Affordable housing – renting and purchasing homes can be difficult
- Affordable health insurance.

What are some of the spiritual needs of single adults?

- To know they can trust the local church and its leaders
- To know they can trust the Bible, that it hasn't become irrelevant
- To know that most Christians are genuine, not hypocrites
- To know that Christianity is different from other world religions
- To make a decision of personal faith in Christ and serving others, not just observing traditions and ceremonies and holidays and having intellectual knowledge
- To develop habits that help them grow spiritually
- To be around others who challenge them spiritually
- To be around others to do life with, like significant friends and family
- To find places of service to help others
- To find a small group to meet with for Bible study

How do single adults feel about the local church?

- Some high school students who normally attended church stop attending when they start college. That trend continues when they graduate and enter the working world, often in a different city than where their family lives.
- They may feel a lack of attachment to a local church because they have no friends or family attending a church where they now live
- In the city where they live, there may be few churches that have a group of single adults attending.
- A Sunday School class without fellowship doesn't feel very inviting
- Older single adults want groups, friends, activities and service opportunities just like younger adults do.

How do single adults feel about the church?

- If a church attempts to start a single adult ministry, they often combine young single adults with older single adults (22-60 yrs old) or they combine them with college students (college and career). These are usually not good choices.
- In general, both married and single adults prefer to be in a study group with people their own age. I recommend offering classes or small groups for single adults that are age-grouped. (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s). In a typical city, there are thousands of people in each of these age groups that are single adults – either never married, divorced or widowed. Pick a target age group and get started.

Which age group do we start with first?

- If you have a core group of people who are the same age, start with them, no matter what their age is.
- If you don't have a core group, what age group would be easiest? Which age group is most like the people who attend your church?

What about single parents with children?

- I encourage you to welcome the children into your social activities whenever you can. The parents will appreciate being able to bring their children to a supper or on a camping trip, and the children will enjoy having lots of “adopted aunts and uncles” to get to know.

If you start a single adult ministry for people in their 20s

- Consider having an age target of 22 to 30 yrs old.
- Choose one of your best teachers – spiritually mature and friendly. They should be good at facilitating a group discussion. I suggest a young married couple or a single adult who has had experience leading a small group with BCM, CRU, FCA or some other ministry.
- Your new class should really strive to build relationships –
 - sit together in worship
 - eat lunch on Sunday
 - get together on Friday night
 - Have a once-a-month party and invite friends
 - Schedule some events – bowling, putt-putt, game night, ski trip

What does a balanced ministry for single adults of any age look like?

- Sit together in the worship service
- Have a small group Bible study every week with lots of discussion
- Have fellowship opportunities every week – Sunday lunch & Friday
- Have a monthly event to invite lots of people to who may not regularly attend your small group
- Find ministry opportunities to do as a group – help children, help older adults, help the homeless, help feed the hungry, etc.
- Constantly share your leadership and develop new leaders
- Use the website, Facebook, texting, emails, phone calls, make visits
- Help people to do individual learning – read the Bible, do Bible study homework, pray, memorize a verse, read a book, help with a ministry

Should we have a Sunday School class or a small group in a home?

- If your church has other S.S. classes, then definitely offer classes on Sunday morning for each age group of single adults
 - College, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, etc.
- If you don't have enough quality rooms available on Sunday, then consider starting your ministry with a small group in a home
- Ideally, you will have both - groups at church and groups in homes

How big should we allow our class/group to get?

- It can be very positive having 20-100 people in a room
- After you sing, make announcements and so forth, you need to break the large group down into smaller discussion groups of 6-8 people

What was our experience like?

- At one church, our ministry grew so that we had 25 in college attendance, 30 in their twenties, 20 in their 30s, 20 in their forties/fifties, and 50 attending in their sixties.
- At another church we grew to have 40 in the twenties class and 30 in the thirties class, and 20 in a divorce-recovery class.
- At another church we grew to have 250 coming in the college group
- As our ministry grew, our single adults became involved in many areas of church ministry
 - Choir, praise team, tech crew, S.S. teachers with children and youth, teaching single adult classes, missions and in young couple's classes after they got married

It isn't easy, but it is fun

- My wife and I remember what it felt like to be single in a new city and not have friends and family around
- Not everyone can travel across country to go home for a holiday – we loved having our single adult friends join us at Thanksgiving and for their birthdays
- We got to perform and attend a lot of weddings
- We kept contact with newlyweds over the years and loved watching them raise their families
- We spent almost 40 years of ministry in working with single adults. Praying that your ministry will be fruitful!