

Common Questions About Growing Young

What is Growing Young?

Growing Young is a strategy that many churches have adopted to both involve and retain their young people. In general, North American Churches are seeing their populations shrink and their members age. Growing Young breathes life into the whole church by guiding leaders to reach out to younger generations.

Is Growing Young only for young people?

Growing Young is NOT just for Young adults. The Church is not forgetting about its older members, it is simply making young people feel more at home in the Church. The focus may be on 15-29 year-olds but that is because this is the group that has yet to make a commitment to the Church in the same way their parents and grandparents have. By making younger generations feel at home, the Church may continue to grow and thrive in the years to come. That is why we call our strategy Growing Young Together.

Is Growing Young just another book?

No, Growing Young is a game plan with six essential strategies of Church renewal. Since each strategy is heavily centered around Jesus, they go well beyond the pages of Growing Young and into the hearts of Church members.

Is Growing Young a good program for First CRC?

Yes! Growing Young is a program that will help First CRC live out its mission of growing in love for God and neighbor. Growing Young is about Church transformation so it is not only right for First CRC it is also right for many other Churches around the world.

Where did “Growing Young” come from?

Growing Young came out of studies done at the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI). FYI studied over 250 Churches across every denomination and found that, in general, the Church is aging, membership is declining, and the number of religiously unaffiliated people is rising. However, they also found that some Churches in places you would not expect were thriving because they were “Growing Young”. FYI conducted research to discover how these unexpected churches were thriving. The results of this research became the foundation for the Growing Young book with the goal to help other Churches grow young.

Why is our Church constantly changing?

While the Church building and some of its programs are changing, the mission of the Church is not. The mission of the Church is to take part in God’s restorative plan for the world. It is better to see the Church as being renewed than just changing. This renewal is meant to make our congregation into more faithful followers of Jesus.

How does Growing Young impact individuals?

One of the main goals of Growing Young is to empathize with today’s youth. By empathizing with our young adults, we at First CRC, are better able to answer deep faith

questions in a relevant way. Answering difficult life questions is a large part of identity formation. If these answers are focused around Jesus then so is a person's identity. Through empathy, Growing Young helps to form identities centered around Jesus.

Is Church transformation at the center of Growing Young?

No. Church transformation is an important part of Growing Young but it is in no way at its core. The center of Growing Young is Jesus. Growing Young revives the Church because it brings back the person of Jesus. If the Church loses Jesus as its core it ceases to be the Church. By making Jesus relevant to young people the Church will naturally be renewed.

What comes from a Church that grows young?

Jesus becomes the new found core of the Church. Some of the many positive results of Growing Young are that it produces a faith-based community, forms a more robust gospel, and improves Biblical living. By recognizing Jesus in all we do, First CRC will be better able to follow where the Holy Spirit where it is leading us.

Do young adults actually want to grow young?

Yes, Growing Young studies have shown that young adults feel that when they are treated as full-fledged members rather than kids to be entertained, they begin to truly feel what it means to be the Church. This sort of reaction comes from prioritizing young adults and families in the Church. This prioritizing seeks to utilize their gifts, and it does not mean we want to forget about the rest of the Church.

Does Growing Young mean we will lose our CRC identity?

Not at all. We are still a Christian Reformed Church but instead of looking at doctrinal distinctions we embrace the calling to grow in God's love and share God's love with the world around us. If this is our focus, our mission is strengthened by what connects us rather than what divides us from our community. This common ground will allow us to follow the example of Jesus which is to reflect mercy, not judgment, on those in our community.

How long will "Growing Young" last at our Church?

Growing Young is an ongoing process because our community is constantly changing. First CRC will continually be renewed in order to be relevant to those around us while at the same time keeping Jesus at the center of all we do.