



Mobilising Prayer with and for Young People

An opportunity to discuss and challenge some ideas for engaging people in prayer for young people and engaging young people in prayer themselves

SESSION OUTLINE

1. Why do we need people praying for young people?

- Stages of Faith Development in Young People
- No neutral ground
- Question? Can our words and presence alone make a difference?

2. Mobilising others to pray for young people

- The power of 'Intercession'
- Methods

3. Helping young people pray?

- Why
- Methods

4. Close

- Further Thoughts
- Q&A

THE HEART 
OF THE MATTER



STAGES OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE

THE THEORIES: HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

How Humans Develop

Over the past century several prominent sociologists, psychologists and biologists have devised various methods to quantify, chart or even predict the developmental stages of a human being from conception to late adulthood.

There are three pieces of work that stand out...

- Jean William Fritz Piaget's Development Stages (4 Stages)
- Erik Erikson's Childhood and Society 1963 (8 Stages)
- Lawrence Kohlberg's Philosophy of Moral Development 1981 (6 Stages)

PIAGET'S FOUR COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Stage

Characterised by

Sensori-motor
(Birth-2 yrs)

Differentiates self from objects **Recognises self as agent of action and begins to act intentionally**: e.g. pulls a string to set mobile in motion or shakes a rattle to make a noise
Achieves object permanence: realises that things continue to exist even when no longer present to their senses.

Pre-operational
(2-7 years)

Learns to use language and to represent objects by images and words **Thinking is egocentric**: has difficulty assessing the viewpoint of others.
Classifies objects by a single feature: e.g. groups together all the red blocks regardless of shape or all the square blocks regardless of colour

Concrete operational
(7-11 years)

Can **think logically** about objects and events .
Classifies objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension such as size.

Formal operational
(11 years and up)

Can think logically about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically. **Becomes concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems**

ERIK ERIKSON'S CHILDHOOD AND SOCIETY (1963)

Educational psychologist Erik Erikson suggested that psychosocial development, the changing ways we perceive ourselves individually and in relation to society, occurs in eight stages. A person who masters each stage of development is systematically developing character because each mastered stage results in a favourable virtue. Mastery of each successive virtue is dependent upon mastery of the previous.

1. Birth to 18 Months - **Trust vs. Mistrust - Hope**
2. 18 Months to 3 Years - **Autonomy vs. Shame – Right use of Will**
3. 3 to 5 Years - **Initiative vs. Guilt – Self Confidence**
4. 6 to 12 Years - Industry vs. Inferiority - Competence
5. 12 to 18 Years - Identity vs. Role Confusion - Loyalty
6. 18 to 35 - Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation - Commitment
7. 35 to 55 - Productivity vs. Self absorption - Learning
8. 55 to Death - Integrity vs. Despair - Wisdom

KOHLBERG'S PHILOSOPHY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The theory holds that moral reasoning, the basis for ethical behaviour, has six identifiable developmental stages, each more adequate at responding to moral dilemmas than its predecessor.

- 1. Pre-Conventional 1. Obedience and punishment orientation** i.e. **How can I avoid punishment?** At this stage, children see rules as fixed and absolute. Obeying the rules is important because it is a means to avoid punishment.
- 2. Pre-Conventional 2. Self-interest orientation** i.e. **What's in it for me?** Children account for individual points of view and judge actions based on how they serve individual needs. Reciprocity is possible, but only if it serves one's own interests.
- 3. Conventional 3. Interpersonal accord and conformity to social norms** - The good boy/good girl attitude. **This stage of moral development is focused on living up to social expectations and roles.** There is an emphasis on conformity, being "nice," and consideration of how choices influence relationships.
- 4. Conventional 4. Authority and social-order maintaining orientation** (Law and order morality). At this stage of moral development, people begin to consider society as a whole when making judgments. The focus is on maintaining law and order by following the rules, doing one's duty, and respecting authority.

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- 5. Post-Conventional 5. Social contract orientation.** Social Contract and Individual Rights . At this stage, people begin to account for the differing values, opinions, and beliefs of other people. Rules of law are important for maintaining a society, but members of the society should agree upon these standards.
- 6. Post-Conventional 6. Universal ethical principles** (Principled conscience). Kohlberg's final level of moral reasoning is based upon universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning. At this stage, people follow these internalized principles of justice, even if they conflict with laws and rules

THE THEORIES: HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Faith Development based on human development

A number of people have taken the theories of Piaget, Erikson and Kohlberg and used them as a foundation to chart or predict other areas of a persons development – notably faith! “If a person’s moral standards develop like this, then faith must develop like this”.

Two main pieces of work:

- John H. Westerhoff *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 1970
- James Fowler *Stages of Faith* 1981

THE THEORIES: HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

John H. Westerhoff – Rings of Faith

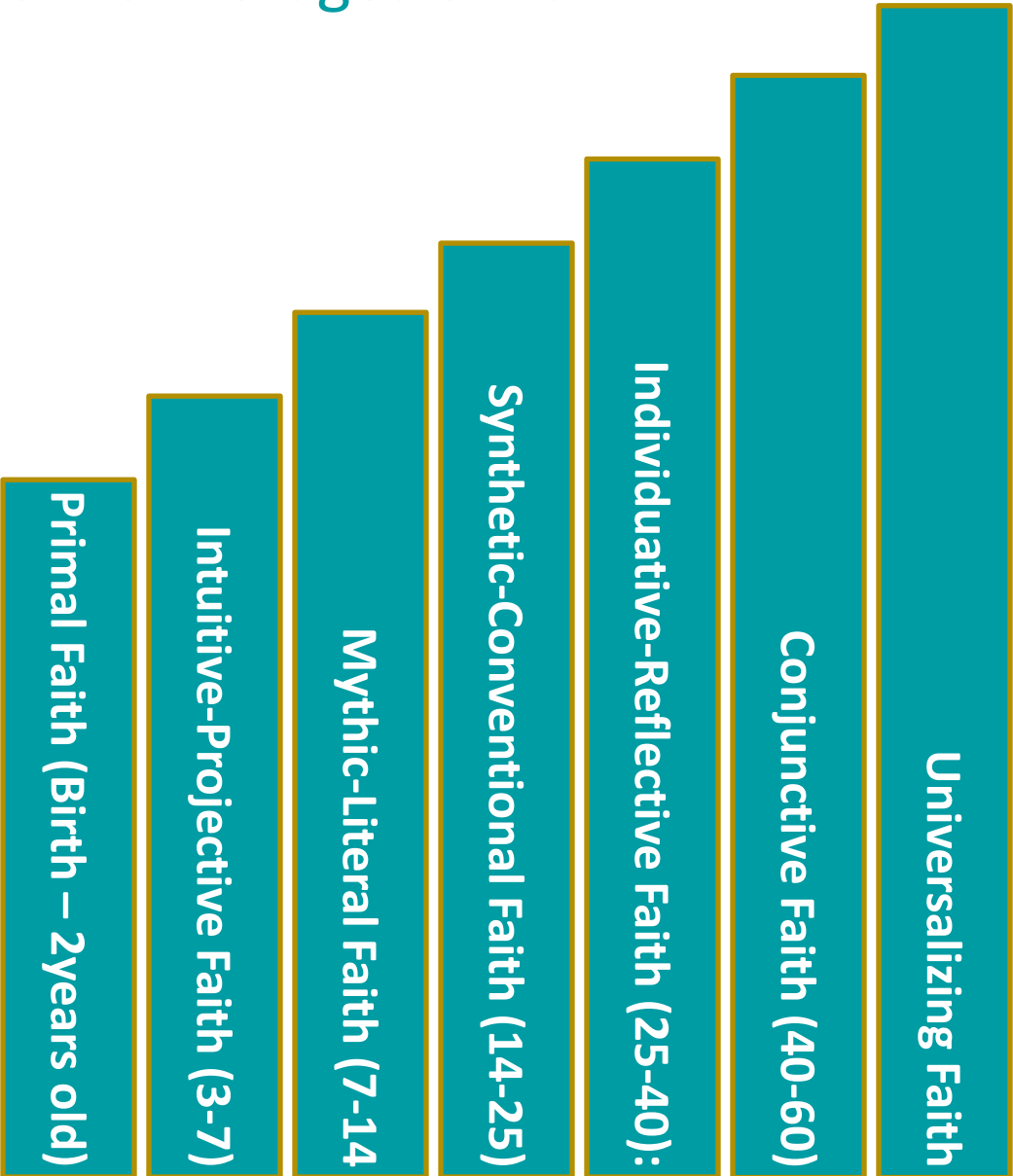
Westerhoff identifies four 'rings' like the rings of a tree trunk. The young trunk has few rings; older trunks have many. The rings of faith can grow as a result of the right life experiences and in interacting with others and with God.



- **Experiencing faith**
- **Joining/belonging faith**
- **Searching/exploring faith**
- **Owning faith**

THE THEORIES: HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

James Fowler - Stages of Faith



THE THEORIES: HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

James Fowler - Stages of Faith

Whereas Westerhoff suggested that faith developed in a series of concentric rings, James Fowler suggested that faith develops in a series of stages...

- **Primal Faith (Birth – 2years old):** Earliest faith is what enables us to undergo separation from parents without undue anxiety or fear of loss of self. Primal faith forms before there is language. It forms the basic rituals of care and interchange and mutuality. And, although it does not determine the course of our later faith, it lays the foundation on which later faith will build or that will have to be rebuilt in later faith.
- **Intuitive-Projective Faith (3-7):** The next stage of faith emerges in early childhood with the acquisition of language. Here imagination, stimulated by stories, gestures, and symbols and not yet controlled by logical thinking, combines with perception and feelings to create long-lasting faith images . . .Representations of God take conscious form in this period and draw, for good or ill, on children's experiences of their parents or other adults to whom they are emotional attached in the first years of life . . .when conversion experiences occur at later stages in ones' life, the images formed in this stage have to be reworked in some important ways.

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James Fowler - Stages of Faith

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- **Mythic-Literal Faith (7-14):** Here concrete operational thinking, the developing ability to think logically, emerges to help us order the world with categories of causality, space, time and number. We can now sort out the real from the make-believe, the actual from fantasy. We can enter into the perspectives of others, and we become capable of capturing life and meanings in narrative and stories. **During the Mythic-Literal stage a child understands concrete concepts--things she/he can see or touch such as a policeman, lawyer or pastor but is unable to grasp abstract concepts (things you envision in your mind) such as law enforcement, law or theology (and yes, that includes God too).**
- **Synthetic-Conventional Faith (14-25):** The next stage characteristically begins to take form in early adolescence. The emergence of formal operational thinking [the ability to think abstractly] opens the way for reliance upon abstract ideas and concepts for making sense of one's world. The person can now reflect upon past experience and search them for meaning and pattern. At the same time, concerns about one's personal future--one's identity, one's work, career, or vocation--and one's personal relationships become important"

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- **Individuative-Reflective Faith (25-40):** In this next stage two important developments have to occur. Firstly we have to go through the turmoil of questioning, examining, and reclaiming the values and beliefs that we have formed to that point in our lives. They must become explicit commitments rather than blind commitments. Secondly we have to claim what Fowler calls an 'executive ego.' In the previous stage . . .one could say that a person's identity is largely shaped by her or his roles and relationships . . .In moving to the Individuative-Reflective stage, one has to face and answer such questions as, Who am I when I'm not defined by being my parents' son or daughter? Who am I when I'm not defined by the work I do? "Who is the 'I' that has those roles and relations but is not fully expressed by any one of them?"
- **Conjunctive Faith (40-60)** This stage involves the embrace and integration of opposites and polarities in one's life. It means realizing in one's late thirties, forties, or beyond that one is both young and old, and that youth and age are held together in the same life . . .It means coming to terms with the fact that we are both constructive people and, inadvertently destructive people. (Romans 7.14)

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James Fowler - Stages of Faith

Whereas Westerhoff suggested that faith developed in a series of concentric rings, James Fowler suggested that faith develops in a series of stages...

- **Universalizing Faith:** "Beyond paradox and polarities, persons in the Universalizing Faith stage are grounded in a oneness with the power of being or God. Their visions and commitments seem to free them for a passionate yet detached spending of the self in love. Such persons are devoted to overcoming division, oppression, and violence, and live in effective anticipatory response to an inbreaking commonwealth of love and justice, the reality of an inbreaking kingdom of God."

This stage is exceedingly rare. The persons best described by it have become incarnators and actualisers of the spirit. They are "contagious" in the sense that they create zones of liberation from the social, political, economic and ideological shackles we place and endure on human futurity. Living with felt participation in a power that unifies and transforms the world, they are often experienced as subversive of the structures (including religious structures) by which we sustain our individual and corporate survival, security and significance. Many persons in this stage die at the hands of those whom they hope to change. The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us.. Life is both loved and held to loosely.

HOW FAITH DEVELOPS IN YOUNG PEOPLE


According to experts a child's 'set point' in:

- Faith
- Hope
- Trust
- The ability to contemplate the transcendental
- Autonomy
- Self Confidence

Is set by the age of two - five



So WHAT?




**You are not the only one fighting
to influence young peoples
commitment and faith!!!**

**“There is no neutral ground in the
universe; every square inch, every split
second, is claimed by God and counter-
claimed by Satan” CS Lewis**



THIS IS WAR!!!



EPHESIANS 6 “FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES.”



So WHAT?

DISCUSSION

In small groups to discuss the following:

- As anointed evangelists, gifted communicators and Spirit filled children of God our words and presence must have real power, but can our words and presence alone make a real difference?
- If faith is putting belief in to action, do you have 'faith' in the power of prayer and its impact on your ministry... or just belief?
- Is it easy to get complacent and forget the importance of prayer?
- The YFC mission statement is unrealistic; we don't take good news relevantly to every young person... but if we could mobilise prayer for every young people what effect would that have? Is it even possible?



INTERCESSION

Standing in the gap for young people

Helping others to pray for young people and you

INTERCESSION

What does it mean?

- From the Latin words *Inter* (between, among) and *Cedo* (to go). To intercess (intercede) is to go between one person and another.
- **OT: Hebrew** word which we translate as 'Intercession' is ***Paga*** and means much more than interceding.
 - Used in Joshua to describe the boundary between two opposing tribes. Paga is a frontline activity.
 - Used throughout the OT to describe a violent meeting between two opposing forces.
 - Used in some areas (Jeremiah) to describe a fierce wrestle between a person and God.
 - Used in Genesis & Ruth to describe an act of begging.
 - Jeremiah is told to not Paga 'Wrestle' with God on behalf of his people.

INTERCESSION

What does it mean?

Seems violent and aggressive?

Matthew 11:12: “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.”

Ephesians 6 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

INTERCESSION

What does it mean?

- From the Latin words *Inter* (between, among) and *Cedo* (to go). To intercess (intercede) is to stand between one person and another.
- **NT: Greek** word which we translate as 'Intercession' is ***Enteuxis*** and is used to describe:
 - A petition to a king on another's behalf.
 - The work of Christ and the Holy Spirit on our behalf.
 - A loud protest between Festus (governor of Judea) and the Jews in Acts.
- Affirmed by Paul in 1 Tim 4:5

INTERCESSION

We can stand in
the gap on behalf
of young people

INTERCESSION

We **MUST** stand in
the gap on behalf
of young people

INTERCESSION

Helping others pray
for young people
and for you.

INTERCESSION

What does it need?

- Identification with the need
- Identification with the people in need
- A desire to 'stand with' (Aaron & Hur)
- A burden for prayer
- A sense of the need to persevere
- A sense of 'togetherness' – Matt 18:18-20 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. **For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.**"
- A sense that it is making a real difference
- Something to say thank you for (Yadah/charis)

INTERCESSION

Discuss how we can help people engage in intercession on our behalf and on behalf of young people by addressing each of the points below:

- Identification with the need
- Identification with the people in need
- A desire to 'stand with' (Aaron & Hur)
- A burden for prayer
- A sense of the need to persevere
- A sense of 'togetherness'
- A sense that it is making a real difference
- Something to say thank you for (Yadah/charis)

INTERCESSION

How can we help people intercede on behalf of young people and our work with them?

- Prayer Diaries/News Letters
- Web – Twitter & Email
- Prayer Events/Local Commissioning
- Prayer Warriors
- Trustee/Exec Member
- Adopt a school/person

National day/week of prayer for young people???



Helping Young People Pray



Helping Young People Pray

Why /How/Discuss