



A Generation in Reach

*Research-backed insights on how a Gospel Advancing
approach accelerates youth ministry growth*





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Introduction

Teens encountering Jesus.

Students' lives transformed by the power of the Gospel.

A vibrant ministry, brimming with youth excited about their faith in Christ.

Most youth leaders embarked on ministry eager to see results like these. But along the way, they came to realize something was missing—that there was a large gap between the fruit they hoped for and the reality of their ministry.

Over the past decade, statistics have told the story of teenagers walking away from the Christian faith in record numbers.¹ Ministries have struggled to fill seats, and even when students do show up, many are apathetic, distracted, or there just to connect with friends. These and other stresses can lead to youth leader burnout and rapid turnover.²

Meanwhile, nearly a billion teens worldwide are stumbling through the darkness of a life without Jesus, untouched by the Good News of salvation and eternal life.

All of which can leave leaders wondering:

Is there more?

Have we lost this generation?

Or is there still a way for the Church to achieve those fruitful outcomes leaders imagined when they first walked through the youth room doors?

Why There Is Hope

Amid these questions, *A Generation in Reach* joins the recent voices that are sharing more encouraging news about the faith interests of young people today.³ It spotlights a solution to capitalizing on those interests: **a simple, proven, and radically biblical approach to making, molding, and multiplying teenage disciples.** This approach is called Gospel Advancing ministry, and the following pages reveal how and why it revolutionizes youth discipleship wherever it is practiced.

Gospel Advancing is a ministry outreach model that moves students beyond just a come-and-see strategy—in which they simply invite their friends to youth group—to include a go-and-tell approach that activates them to engage others in relational conversations about Jesus and clearly share the Gospel. This approach multiplies disciples, as youth leaders advance the Gospel not only to the students in their group but also through their students to their classmates, teammates, and friends.

The Gospel Advancing philosophy is not new. It is a 2,000-year-old way of doing ministry, modeled in Scripture by Jesus and the apostles. (See page 41.) And now, as *A Generation in Reach* demonstrates, it is proven to both create new disciples and deepen the faith of those who are already following Christ.

Gospel Advancing ministry is not confined to a particular culture or region. Because it is rooted in Scripture and the universal truth of the Gospel, leaders can adapt it to any geographical area or cultural context, with powerful results.

In addition, the Gospel Advancing approach does not require leaders to uproot everything they are doing and start over. Rather, through simple, consistent practices, it infuses ministries with a new heart—one that taps into the **power of the Gospel and the potential of teenagers** to ignite students' faith and reach an entire generation with the eternity-altering Good News of Jesus.

“

I believe that if I had not discovered Gospel Advancing years ago, I would have burned out of youth ministry very quickly.

Pauline E.

And now, more than ever, the time is ripe to tap into that power and potential on behalf of teenagers. Recent surveys suggest that youth worldwide are more spiritually open than they've been in decades. The hard soil of young people's hearts is beginning to soften, and many are seeking answers in religion and faith traditions.⁴ For example, in 2022, Barna's *Open Generation* survey reported that 59% of all teens and 78% of non-Christian teens across 26 countries were either *very motivated* or *somewhat motivated* to learn more about Jesus.⁵

A Gospel Advancing ministry approach provides a way to engage these teens with the Good News, as well as equip them with a mission and a purpose once they have put their trust in Jesus for salvation.

Why the Need for Research

More than a decade ago, Dare 2 Share Ministries commissioned a research study to evaluate how well youth groups across the United States were doing with evangelism. As we analyzed the findings, it became clear that each of the most effective youth groups embodied seven important values, which became the foundation of the Gospel Advancing ministry approach. We soon discovered that all seven of the values are demonstrated in the Bible, especially the Gospels and the book of Acts. (See page 41.)

Since that time, Dare 2 Share and its ministry partners have helped youth leaders all around the world implement Gospel Advancing values. For years, we have heard amazing stories of transformation from these Gospel Advancing leaders, but increasingly we became curious to know if these stories were the exception or the rule. We wanted to answer the question:

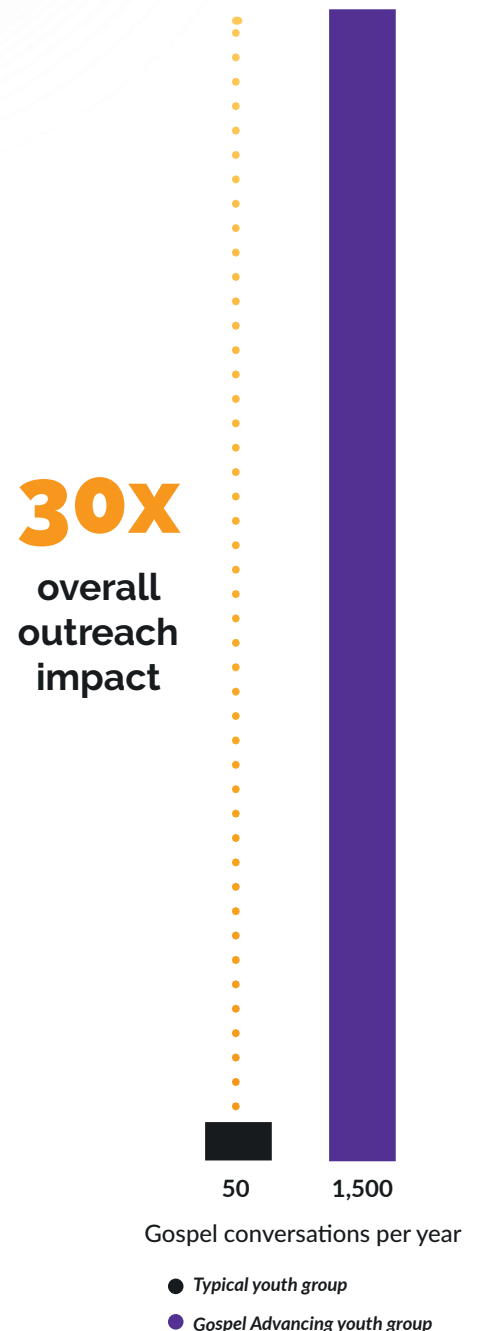
Does a Gospel Advancing ministry approach consistently create disciple multipliers?

To find out, Dare 2 Share partnered with independent firm Clarity Research to survey thousands of youth leaders worldwide. We followed up by holding multiple focus groups in five U.S. cities, engaging in conversations with youth pastors to help us further understand the results and ultimately improve Gospel Advancing youth ministry strategies.

As the survey results came in, we were thrilled to discover that the answer to the question is a resounding *yes!* The research confirmed that a Gospel Advancing ministry approach is a game-changer, producing **up to 30 times more outreach impact** than a typical youth group.

*All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching **more and more people** may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the **glory of God**.*

2 Corinthians 4:15



Why This Report

This news about the effectiveness of Gospel Advancing ministry was too good to keep to ourselves. Dare 2 Share's goal is to spread the word to as many leaders as possible, with the aim of:

- energizing youth leaders with purpose, direction, and hope.
- helping senior pastors, parents, youth volunteers, and other ministry leaders understand the importance of Gospel Advancing and how they can support it.
- encouraging senior pastors and other ministry leaders to consider adopting a Gospel Advancing strategy church-wide or throughout their ministry.

As the Church works together to raise up youth leaders who equip and inspire teens to put Gospel Advancing principles into practice, young people themselves will be the primary force that reaches their generation for Christ—deepening their own faith in the process. Many Gospel Advancing youth leaders have discovered that the best way to get students to grow in their faith, is to get them to “go” with the Gospel.

“

When I was first in ministry and trying to figure out what it meant to be a youth pastor, I learned about Gospel Advancing. We had 12 kids who learned to share the Gospel, and now 10 of them are in ministry as adults.

Justin J.

Why Youth Ministry Is Essential

One of our top research findings is that **Gospel Advancing youth leaders greatly accelerate a youth group's spiritual impact.**

As the coming pages highlight, groups see potent change when adult leaders—especially those with direct influence on teenagers—model relational evangelism by sharing the Gospel through conversations with non-Christians outside of the church, in their daily lives.

For insight on what this and other findings mean for youth ministries, read on. Through statistics, compelling stories, and practical tips, *A Generation in Reach* outlines the why, what, and how of Gospel Advancing ministry. It unfolds our new research findings, which pave an attainable path to thriving ministries, fruitful youth pastors, transformed teenagers, and a generation unleashed to relationally point their peers to the Gospel.

God is on the move in this generation, and youth leaders have a big part to play.

Don't miss it!

2

Results at a Glance

A Generation in Reach outlines a data-supported case for youth ministries worldwide to implement a Gospel Advancing approach, in which students grow spiritually as they themselves make and multiply disciples through *relational evangelism*. As a result, the youth ministries grow in both numbers and spiritual depth.

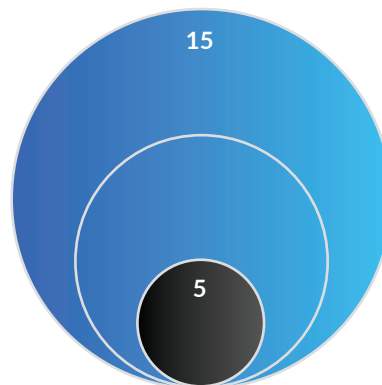


Relational evangelism:
sharing the Gospel through conversations, especially with friends and other peers

Following is a summary of some **key findings** from the *A Generation in Reach* youth pastor survey, conducted by Clarity Research. For a more detailed explanation of the results, turn to page 14.

The research revealed a **striking difference** between a **typical youth group** and a **Gospel Advancing youth group**.

Gospel Advancing youth groups see **3x more youth group growth.**

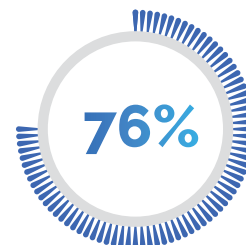
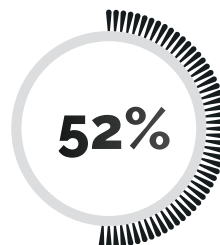


Students gained per year

- Typical youth group
- Gospel Advancing youth group

This is not just believers switching churches. Gospel Advancing youth groups have a **50% higher likelihood of new believers** joining the group.

- Typical youth group
- Gospel Advancing youth group



Groups with new believers joining

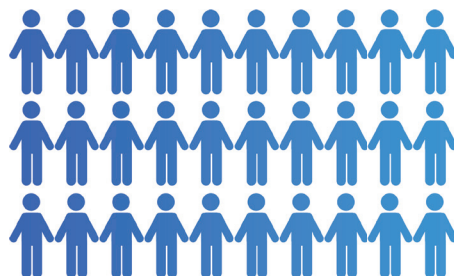
This growth is fueled by...

...3x more students sharing the Gospel...

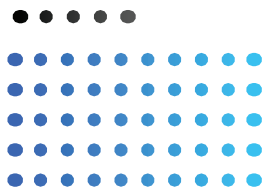
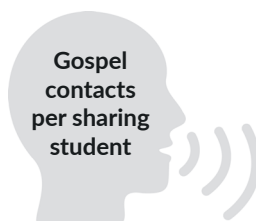
Number of students sharing a Gospel message

● Typical youth group

● Gospel Advancing youth group



...with 10x more people...

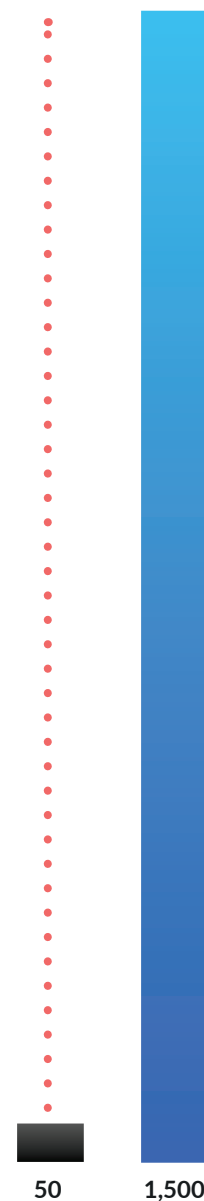


...40% more effectively.



Groups see nearly **40% more conversions** from students' Gospel conversations.

The impact is undeniable, with Gospel Advancing youth groups seeing **30x more outreach impact.**



Students are leading the way, not only in **evangelism**, but also in *discipleship*, **with 3x more students discipling other students.**

Student disciplers per group

● Typical youth group

● Gospel Advancing youth group





Why Teenagers Matter

Today's teens are more than 1 billion strong.⁶ Exact statistics vary depending on the source, but one recent study⁷ found that:

- Roughly a third of teenagers say they have no religion at all.
- About a quarter of them identify with non-Christian religions.
- Among the 40+/-% who consider themselves Christian, 40% say they never read the Bible, and more than half say that “all religions teach equally valid truths.”

These teens are rapidly becoming tomorrow's adults, who will shape and govern our societies—either with or without godly worldviews and morality. What's more, each one is an image bearer of God, with an eternal destiny—either with God in His everlasting Kingdom or forever separated from Him in Hell.

In other words, these teens matter. They matter to our world, and they matter to God.

A Potent Combination

So how do we accomplish the radical goal of reaching 1 billion teens with the Good News of salvation through Jesus?

If the past is a guide, it will be through a combination of two influential forces:

the power of the Gospel and the potential of teens.

Throughout history, the simple truth of the Gospel has radically changed lives and transformed whole societies.

What is the Gospel?

For a definition and a simple acrostic tool that helps teens share it clearly and succinctly, turn to page 42.



Also throughout history, young people have led the way in many of the great movements of the Spirit—such as the Great Awakenings in the 1700s and the Jesus Movement in the 1960s and '70s—that turned hearts toward Jesus in large numbers.

What makes youth such an influential force in spiritual movements? Here are just a few of the factors:

- Youth are determining who they are and what they believe about the world, which means they tend to be more willing to consider spiritual ideas. More than three-quarters of Generation Alpha—today's emerging youth—say that their spiritual journey is an important part of their identity, including nearly half of those who identify as non-religious. Nearly three-quarters of those who don't attend church say they would go if someone invited them.⁸
- Young people's stage of brain development makes them especially open to peer influence, according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health.⁹ Consequently, Christian teens are in a unique position to reach other teens with the Gospel.
- Compared with people in other life stages, teenagers are more likely to brim with energy, passion, and idealism.
- Teens are naturally in contact with their peers through school, activities, and social media, which gives them opportunities and influence that adults do not have.

*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God
that brings salvation to everyone who believes.*

Romans 1:16

An Evangelism Focus

What adults—especially youth ministry leaders—do have is an ability to model relational evangelism by sharing the Gospel with people in their own lives (outside of the church), while also equipping teenagers to make the most of the influence they have on their peers. Youth leaders can regularly train and activate students to pray for, care for, and share the Gospel with other teens, who in turn can teach their peers to do the same when they put their trust in Christ—a process called *disciple-multiplication*.

“

I wanted to share the Gospel with others because I knew how I felt. I wanted other people to feel what I felt and have this sense of relief that someone is there for you and there to stay.

Adi, student

By all accounts, this degree of focus on teen evangelism and disciple-multiplying is rare in modern youth ministries. And as the next chapter explains, there is a stark difference in ministry impact between youth groups that prioritize relational evangelism and disciple multiplication and those that do not. Read on to discover what our research revealed about how that difference plays out in real ministries around the globe.



For me, sharing the Gospel became much more than something I did—it became the core of who I was.

Grace W.

Gospel Advancing Spotlight: **Grace's Story**

The ultimate test of a Gospel Advancing ministry approach is how it impacts real-life teenagers. In the case of Grace, a student from Colorado, USA, the impact was beyond what she could have dreamed.

Grace had trusted in Christ as a young child, but when she entered high school, she was hungry to learn more about her faith. She landed in a local youth group with a Gospel Advancing leader named Morgan, who taught Grace how to articulate the Gospel. Also, every week in the youth group meetings, Morgan would reiterate how important it was for the students to pray for, care for, and share the Gospel with friends who had not yet trusted in Jesus.

“I began talking about Jesus at school, and that led to one of the sweetest moments of my life: watching my best friend Abi coming to Christ,” Grace says. “I even got the privilege of baptizing her.”

Then in Grace's junior year, during a missions trip to Miami, Morgan challenged Grace to not only share her own faith, but also equip other Christians to do the same—starting with a Cuban woman named Martha and her granddaughter Julianna, whom they had met on the trip.

In time, this experience—along with other teachings she heard—led Grace to an epiphany moment, in which she realized there is a vital discipleship step beyond just sharing the Gospel.

“[I learned] that my job is not just to lead people *to* the Christian faith but also to lead people *through* the Christian faith, just like Morgan pushed me to train Martha in Miami,” she explains.

Grace has now discipled multiple students, including her younger sister Ellie, whom she taught to share the Gospel. Ellie enthusiastically embraced the training by teaching her own believing friends what she'd learned and taking opportunities to spread the Good News herself—such as the time in her school lunchroom when Ellie's friend Katelyn noticed a sticker on her water bottle and asked her what it meant. The question opened the door for Ellie to share the Gospel with Katelyn, who wanted to learn more. Before long, Katelyn's investigation led to her putting her faith in Jesus.

This Gospel chain did not end with Katelyn. She has now joined Morgan's youth group, where she is growing in her faith and has learned how to share the Good News with her peers as well—demonstrating the multiplying power at work within a Gospel Advancing ministry.

Watch Grace tell
her story here:



4

Discovering Youth Ministry's Missing Piece

Most modern Christian youth ministries exist to connect teens with Jesus and help them grow in their faith. Although some miss the mark entirely, many do an excellent job of discipling the students who come through the doors. Some encourage students to invite unsaved friends to outreach events where youth pastors present the Gospel up front. Some take students to locations across town or even across the world to serve the needy and give Gospel presentations.

These practices are good and can bear spiritual fruit. But few of them come even close to moving the needle toward engaging the masses of teens in their communities who might not set foot inside a church but still need to hear the message of salvation through Christ.

This leaves almost an entire generation out of reach of the hope found in Jesus.

It can also disillusion church-going leaders and students who see a disparity between the exciting ways the Bible describes God moving and what they experience in church and in their daily lives.

That's where U.S.-based youth leader Logan Floyd found herself after two years of youth ministry.

"I realized we were running programs, and I was meeting with students and teaching lessons, but we weren't investing in them as leaders," Floyd says. "It felt like I was running a cruise ship and that our students were just along for a fun time. There wasn't a lot of real-life spiritual connection happening."

All of that changed after she learned about Gospel Advancing ministry and implemented its simple practices in her group.

"Our students began to realize that they were called to something much bigger than themselves," she explains.

"We went from having just two students who wanted to learn how to share the Gospel to now we have over 100 students that we regularly serve, and our students are in 18 different schools."



The spiritual and numerical growth of her group has greatly encouraged Logan, and she is now seeing the benefits of Gospel Advancing ministry reverberate even after students graduate.

"I'm starting to see the first groups of our students who have gone through what a Gospel Advancing ministry looks like, and it's really encouraging to know that these are not things that are just limited to teenagers, but it's something that these teens take into their adult years and then mobilize and equip other adults," she explains.

Watch Logan tell her story here:



A Generation in Reach Study

Logan's before-and-after story highlights youth ministry's missing piece: a **Gospel Advancing approach** that mobilizes teenagers to relationally share the Gospel with their peers.

Logan's experience also illustrates a contrast between a *typical* youth group approach and a *Gospel Advancing* one—a contrast that was evident in the results of our recent research study.

As explained on page 6, Dare 2 Share partnered with an independent firm, **Clarity Research**, to conduct a survey examining the impact of Gospel Advancing practices within youth groups.

In the survey, youth leaders around the world answered 38 questions about their ministry size, practices, and outcomes. Survey respondents included full-time and part-time paid staff members, as well as volunteers, across a wide range of denominations, church sizes, and geographic locations. (See page 39 for more details.)

Their responses enabled us to determine whether the groups were Gospel Advancing (emphasized relational evangelism), and if so, which of the seven Gospel Advancing values (see page 41) they regularly implement in their ministries.



Typical youth group:

one without a consistent focus on training and activating teenagers to relationally share the Gospel

Gospel Advancing youth group:

a group that consistently trains and activates teenagers to relationally share the Gospel and prioritizes disciple multiplication, including students discipling other students

From there, Clarity Research pinpointed three of the seven values that correlate most strongly with greater ministry impact:

- **relational evangelism.**
- **leaders who model personal relational evangelism.**
- **a disciple-multiplication strategy.**



Disciple-multiplication strategy:

a ministry approach in which teenagers are discipled in their faith and trained not only to share the Gospel with their non-Christian peers, but also to train other students—including those they've led to Christ—how to grow in their faith and share the Gospel as well.

Next, they identified four primary types of groups, delineated by which of these values they had implemented:

Typical youth group (control)

- does not emphasize relational evangelism

Gospel Advancing A youth group

- emphasizes relational evangelism (but leaders do not model it)

Gospel Advancing B youth group

- emphasizes relational evangelism
- has leaders who model relational evangelism (but does not have a disciple-multiplication strategy)

Gospel Advancing C youth group

- emphasizes relational evangelism
- has leaders who model relational Gospel-sharing
- employs a disciple-multiplication strategy

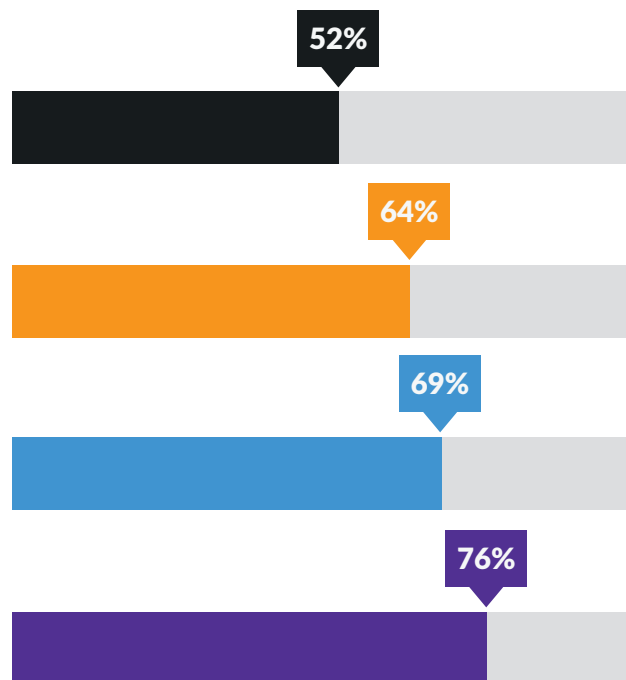
Once group types were established, Clarity Research used measurable outcomes to determine overall ministry outreach-impact numbers. These outcomes included the annual number of:

- Gospel conversations students engaged in.
- new believers who joined the group.
- student baptisms.
- students discipling other students.

What the Survey Revealed

The results indicated a **strong contrast between typical youth groups and those that implemented relational evangelism training and practices** into their ministry.

For example, when groups incorporated student relational evangelism (A groups) into their ministry, the **likelihood of new believers joining the youth group** jumped from 52% to 64%.



Key outcome:

Implementing relational evangelism increases the likelihood that new believers will join the youth group.

“

We have seen a huge explosion of new-believer growth in our middle school students. It is so awesome to see teens discipling other teens and the spiritual growth that comes from it.

Doug H.

The addition of both student relational evangelism and leaders who model relational evangelism (B groups) raised the number to 69%. And for C groups—which also implemented a disciple-multiplication strategy (teens discipling other teens), in addition to both student and leader relational evangelism—the percentage climbed to 76%.

This pattern held true for most of the ministry-outcome markers: The addition of student relational evangelism (A groups) boosted the outcomes beyond that of the control group and again jumped up considerably if groups also included a disciple-multiplication strategy and leaders who modeled relational evangelism (C groups).

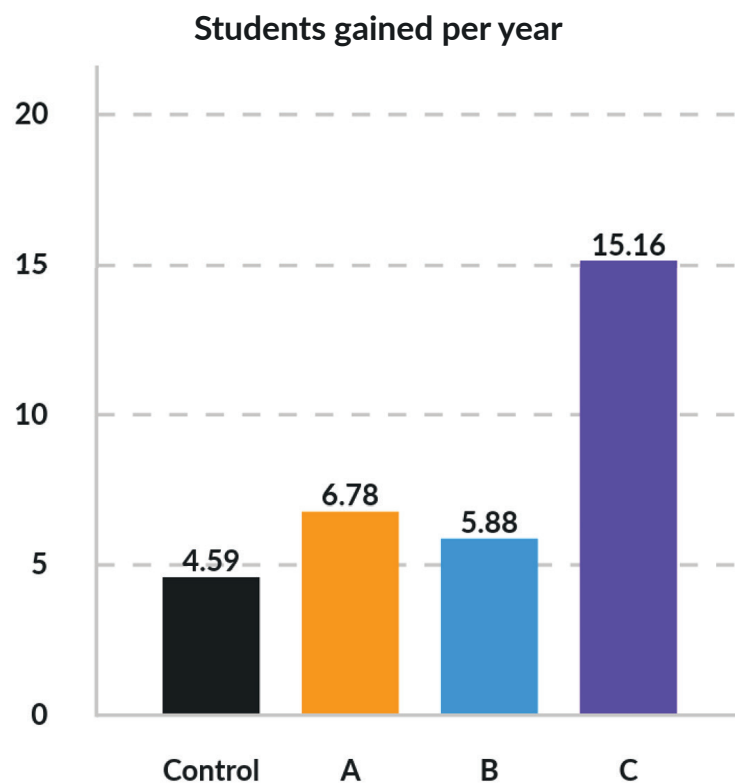
Powerful Results

In summary, Gospel Advancing C groups reported substantially higher growth and outreach results than the typical or “control” groups.

On average, Gospel Advancing youth groups experience:

3x more overall youth group *growth*

On average, Gospel Advancing groups add **3 times** as many new students to their group (**15+**) each year than do typical youth groups (**less than 5**).

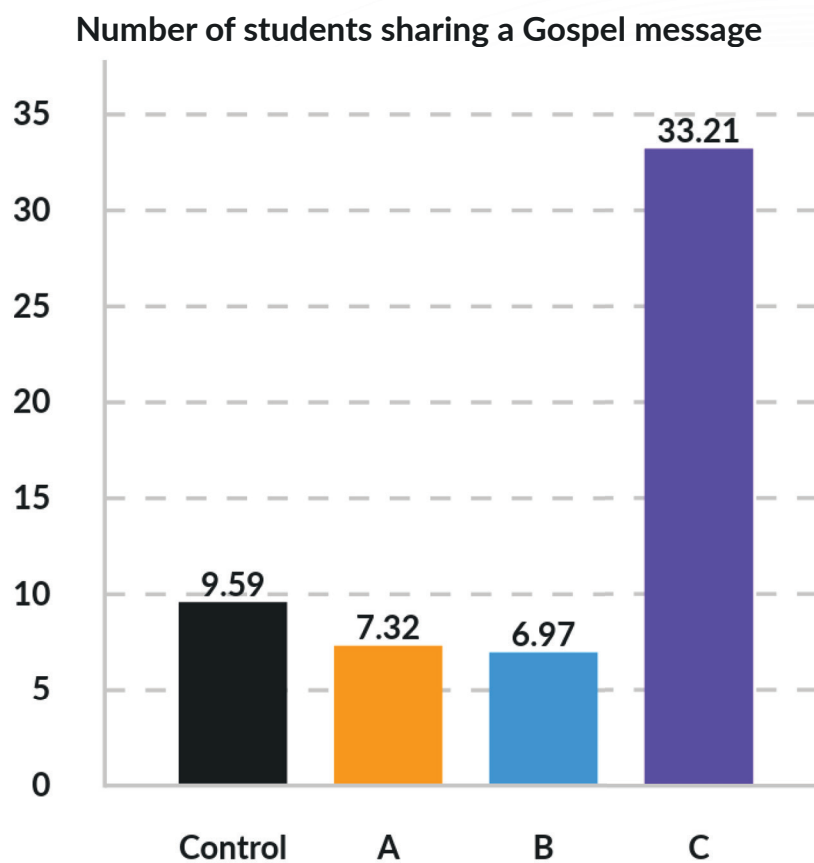


A few months ago I did a lesson on evangelism and students talking to their friends about Jesus. The next week we had 5 new students! Now each week we have new students coming to check it out. They aren't believers yet, but they are checking it out. So exciting!

Jerren W.

3x more *students sharing* their faith

In typical youth groups, **10** teens on average regularly share the Gospel. For Gospel Advancing groups, that number jumps to **33**, moving more students to become active participants in Jesus's mission—and not simply spectators.



My teens are now rising up to see a generation changed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

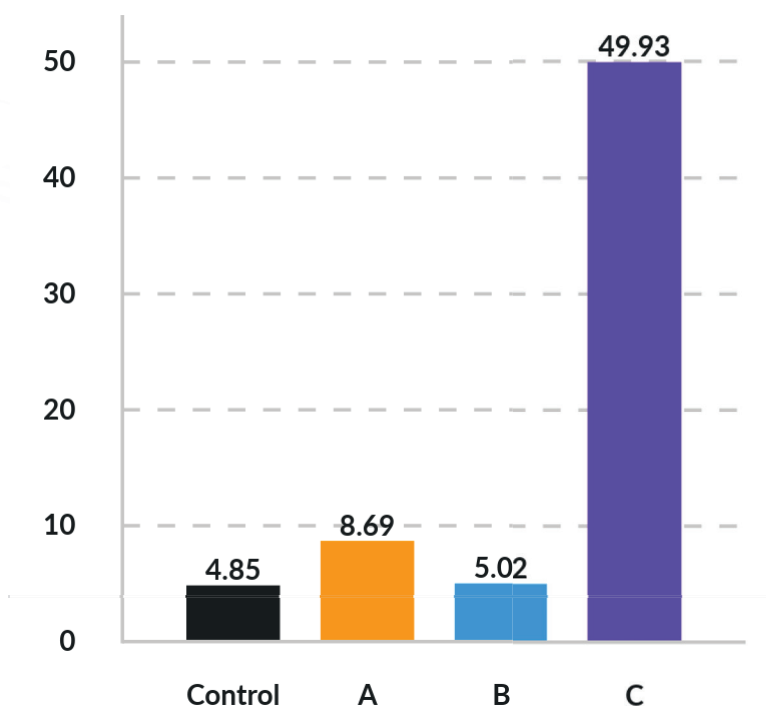
Jonathan P.

Gospel Advancing youth groups experience:

10x more *Gospel conversations* per student

In Gospel Advancing groups, teens who were actively sharing their faith had **50** conversations, on average, in the year. In typical youth groups, faith-sharing students had **5** conversations annually.

Gospel contacts per sharing student



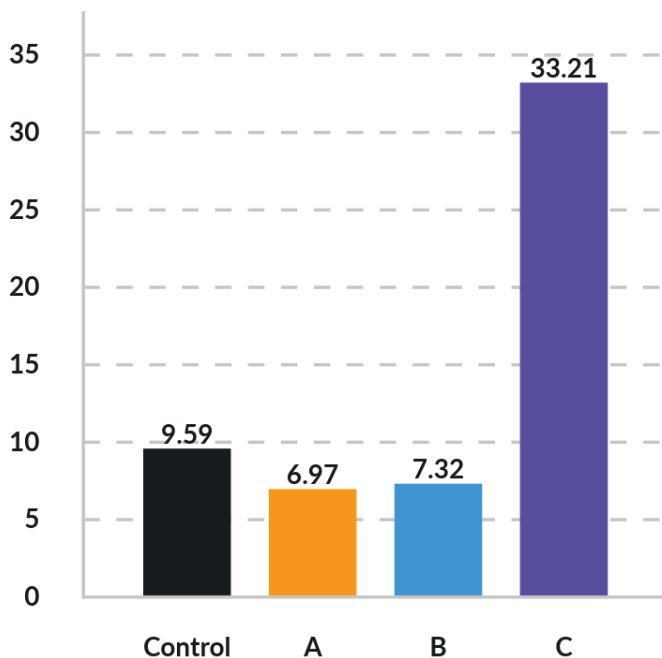
Asher came to know Christ as Savior and immediately set the pace and caught the vision. He is regularly sharing the Gospel with his cross-country team, in his classes, and at his work. He has partnered with many other students who go to his school, and they are leading a Gospel revolution there.

Wes J.

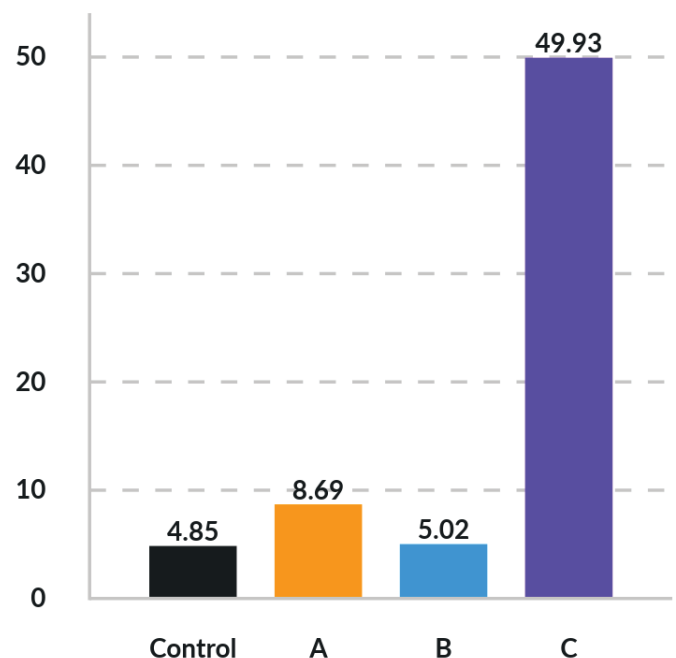
30x more *outreach impact*

By multiplying the number of students who shared a Gospel message by the number of contacts each student shared with, it is reasonable to assume that typical youth groups saw a total of **50** Gospel conversations from their students in a year, while Gospel Advancing groups averaged **1,500** total conversations in one year.

Number of students sharing a Gospel message



Gospel contacts per sharing student



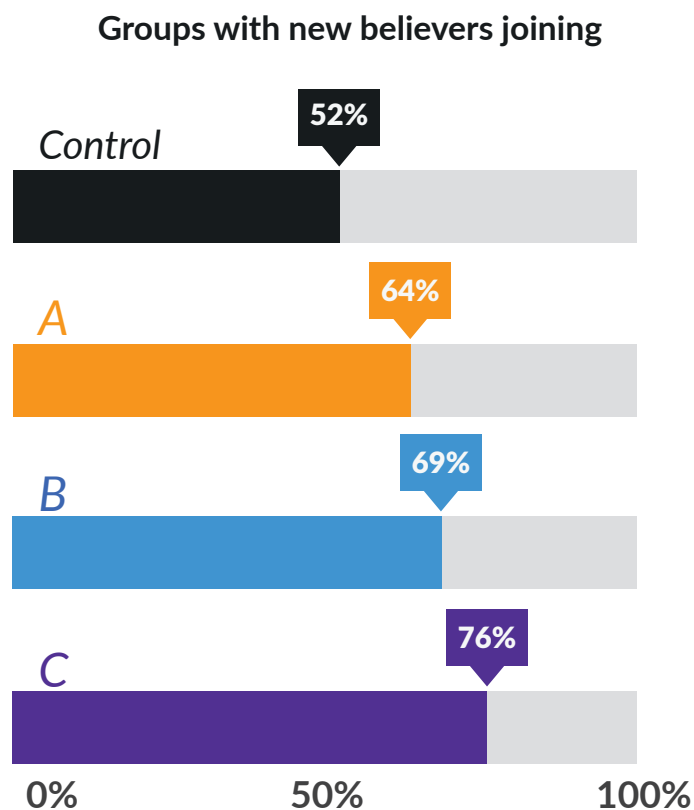
We had to first depend only on youths who were just coming to our church. But after training our youth how to evangelize other students, it's like they were sleeping and when they awakened from the sleep, they don't want to be just at church—they want to go out to advance the Gospel.

Sandie K.

Gospel Advancing youth groups experience:

50% higher likelihood of *new believers* joining the group

More Gospel Advancing groups see numeric growth from new believers joining the group (versus from those who are already believers switching churches) than do typical youth groups. According to the survey, about **half** (52%) of typical youth groups have new believers join the group versus roughly **three-quarters** (76%) of Gospel Advancing groups.



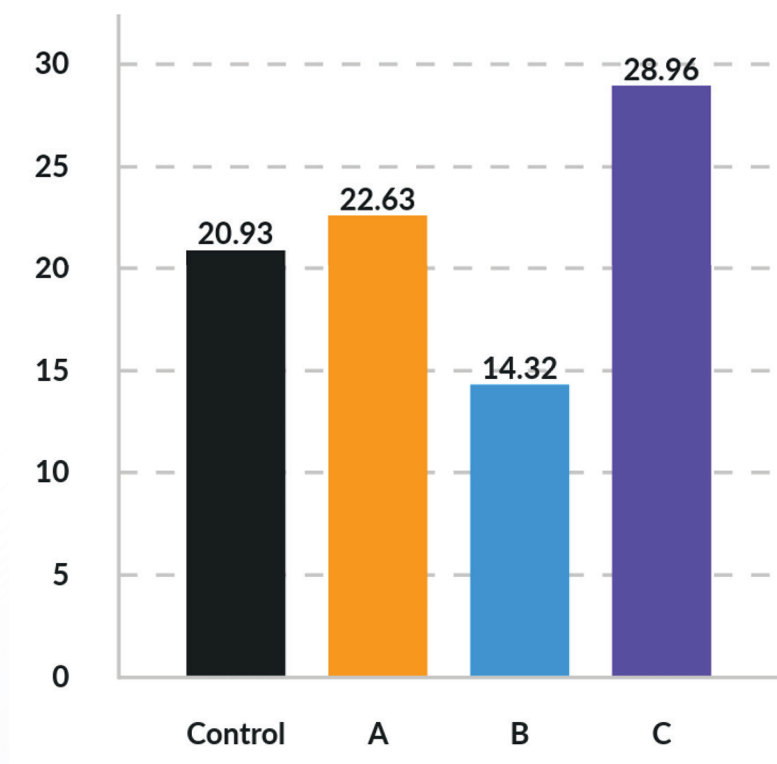
We had a sophomore girl come to know Jesus and then go to share her faith with her friend group. The change God has brought in her life has been evident and has brought many students in.

Wes W.

Nearly **40%** more **conversions** from students' **conversations**

Part of a Gospel Advancing strategy is training students how to more effectively share the Gospel. The survey data shows that this method results in **38%** more conversions from students' Gospel conversations in Gospel Advancing groups than in typical youth groups, with **29** people becoming Christians for every 100 Gospel conversations in Gospel Advancing groups versus **21** per 100 in typical groups.

Contacts (per 100) who decide to trust Christ



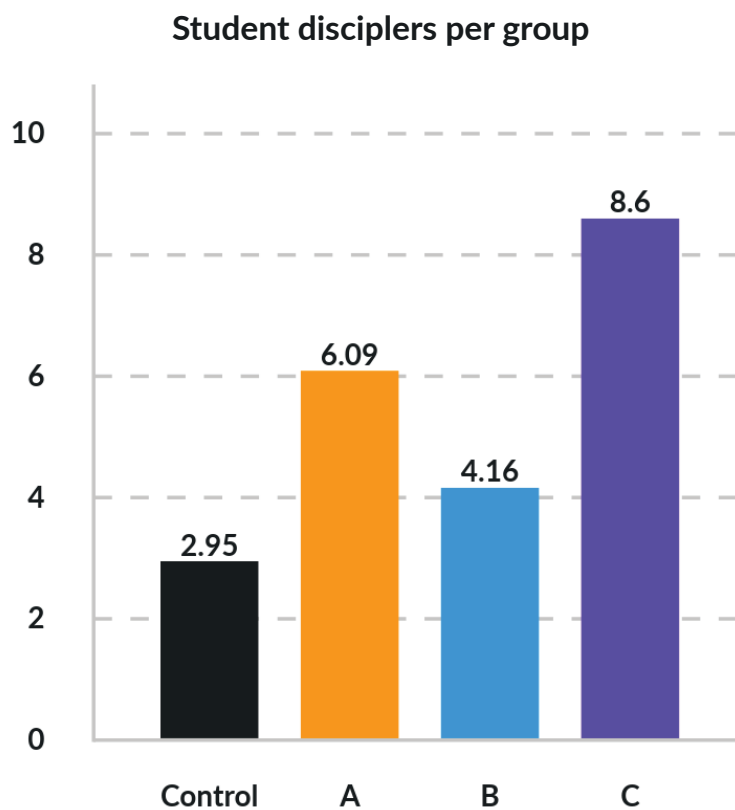
I began talking about Jesus at school, and that led to one of the sweetest moments of my life: watching my best friend Abi coming to Christ.

Grace W., student

Gospel Advancing youth groups experience:

3x more *student leader* development

The data also shows that in Gospel Advancing groups, **8 to 9 students** are actively discipling their peers, on average, compared with just **3** in typical youth groups.



We've quit teaching a lesson in Sunday school and instead empowered older students to disciple younger ones. In just months, it doubled our attendance and created a caring environment we'd never had.

Nathan S.

What the Results Mean for Youth Groups

Analysis of the research findings—both the survey and focus-group discussions—led to several valuable conclusions, some expected and others surprising.

1. Simple changes are powerful.

To achieve strong ministry impact, youth groups don't necessarily need a complete overhaul. In fact, a few simple shifts can lead to big results. One way to picture it is to view programs and structure as a ministry's skeleton and muscles, while a Gospel Advancing philosophy is its heart, infusing it with passion, energy, direction, and, ultimately, teens reached with the Gospel.

For example, a typical group may already do many things well, including:

- relational connection.
- Bible study and teaching.
- mentoring.
- service work.
- fun.

As the survey results show, these practices can yield spiritual fruit, including some numeric growth and new salvations.

However, a few simple but profound changes in the group's focus and regular practices can move them from a "typical" designation to a Gospel Advancing one, greatly expanding their impact in the process. And they don't have to abandon most of their current rhythms or structure to do so.

For insight into the simple changes that can transform a ministry, see **Implementing Youth Ministry's Missing Piece** on page 30.

2. Prayer is baked in.

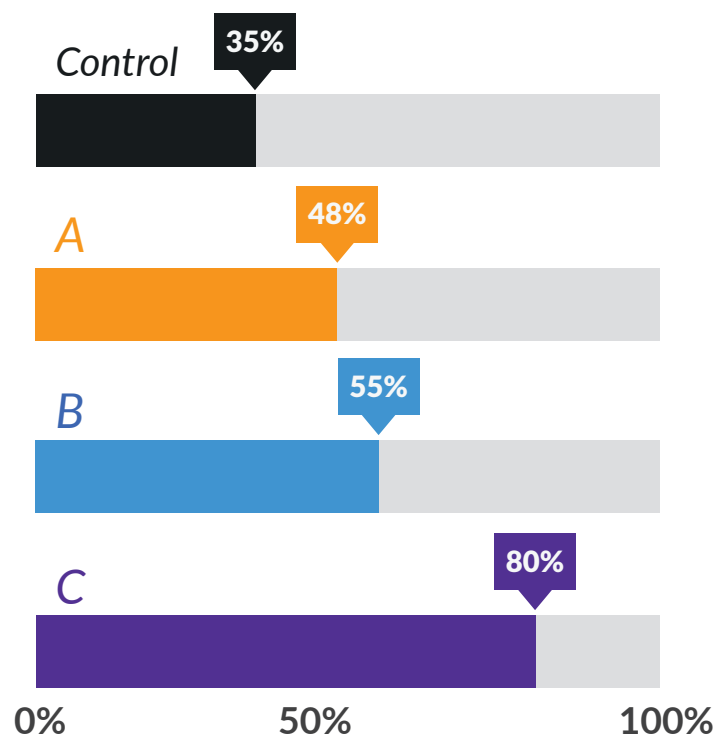
When we first aggregated the research, we were surprised to see that the value of intercessory prayer didn't measurably change ministry outcomes. In other words, simply adding intercessory prayer on its own didn't seem to budge the numbers.



Gospel Advancing intercessory prayer:
Praying for unsaved people to be saved
and for saved people to share the Gospel

Looking further, however, we realized that as leaders adopted more of the Gospel Advancing values, the percentage of groups engaged in intercessory prayer increased—from only 35% of control groups engaged in Gospel Advancing intercessory prayer to 80% of C groups.

Groups engaged in Gospel Advancing intercessory prayer



This finding is consistent with what Gospel Advancing leaders have experienced for decades: When people are taking the risk to share their faith, it drives them to pray for their unbelieving friends. And when people pray, the Lord answers.

The result: Prayer, action, and spiritual outcomes are intertwined in a Gospel Advancing ministry.

3. Consistency is important.

Many youth groups teach an occasional evangelism series, encouraging students to share their faith. But often, the curriculum does not include clear training about what the Gospel is or how to share it. And once the series is over, evangelism quickly falls off the students' radar.

In the survey, groups were considered Gospel Advancing if they implemented student relational evangelism as an ongoing value. Many groups do this through regular training, activation, and taking time in group meetings to share stories of their evangelism efforts. In these cases, faith-sharing becomes part of the group's DNA, and students put it into practice in their daily lives, yielding fruitful results.

“

We do 'Pause for the Cause' each Wednesday night at our midweek meeting. Often we have several students share how they had a Gospel conversation with someone from their school.

Marty T.

4. Evangelism is discipleship.

Ministry leaders sometimes debate about whether it is more important to focus their efforts on evangelism or discipleship. But Gospel Advancing groups quickly realize that this is a false dichotomy.

From the focus-group discussions, we learned that students who evangelize tend to pray more. They connect with Scripture and knowledgeable believers, seeking answers to questions that nonbelievers are asking. And their own faith ignites as they rely on God, watch Him draw people to salvation, and hear stories of their friends and leaders boldly sharing the Gospel. Their experiences force them to go deeper and wider: **deeper in their connection with Jesus and wider in their faith connection with those around them.**

When students are not engaging in outreach, their faith can spoil, like a sponge that sops up milk but isn't wrung out. When teens soak up biblical teaching and then are "wrung out" as they share the Gospel or disciple their peers, their faith stays fresh.

In other words: If you want them to grow in their faith, get them to "go" with the Gospel.

“

Last year, a group of students asked to begin a student-led ministry of going door-to-door through their neighborhoods. They took cookies, prayed with people, and shared the Gospel. It was awesome to see the students organize it!


Kristi T.

A Global Movement

Biblical. Adaptable. Simple.

These characteristics of a Gospel Advancing ministry approach—one that equips and mobilizes teens to share the Gospel with and disciple other teens—make it effective wherever in the world it is put into practice, as evidenced by international participation in the *A Generation in Reach* survey.

The survey garnered usable responses from leaders in 47 nations, with non-North American nations accounting for 25 percent of the responses. In addition, Dare 2 Share and its partner ministries continue to hear and witness stories from around the world of how Gospel Advancing is transforming ministries and their communities.



“I shared about Gospel Advancing with a longtime, nationwide denominational leader here in Spain, and he said: ‘I’m working with a lot of ministries, and I have people here who have been working 10 years or 15 years, but they don’t have a plan or a strategy, and they don’t have the results that you’ve had in 3 years. So keep going, and we will work together to promote the Gospel.’ Europe is a dark place, but through the young people we bring the light of the Gospel.”


Maicon in Spain

“Gospel Advancing has been so simple to implement in our countrywide ministry. For example, I trained some students and then gave them simple training resources. They took those resources back to their campuses. They started meeting with other Christians inside the classroom after hours, and what started as a group to train and encourage Christians has become a constant outreach on their campuses. The groups are growing and multiplying.”

Eduardo in Cuba

“The students experience spiritual growth when they share their faith. For example, we had a student named Panda who didn’t grow up with a lot of attention from his family, so he always caused a lot of problems. But when we began going out for evangelism, Panda started sharing his faith and people accepted the Lord. Within a month, we watched Panda change his behavior and take responsibility. Now he’s working for the team as a volunteer. It brought a change that was very lasting—from his heart. This is the power of the Gospel and the disciple-multiplication approach.”

Stephen in Nigeria



“Over the last 15 years, since I became a youth leader, I have been investing in young people to be Gospel Advancing leaders in their schools, on the streets, and through social media. We have seen God do many things as we have given more and more time to investing, modeling, and equipping young Gospel Advancing leaders instead of just doing evangelism for them.”

Dan in the United Kingdom

“Teenagers, they are just learning—wherever they go, they always try to share this Gospel. So this is a multiplication work, what we are doing here.”

Arif in Pakistan

● **Pakistan**

“It has been a joy in my heart just to see my own kids reaching out and doing discipleship.”

Samson in Kenya

● **Kenya**

● **Zambia**

“Learning about the Gospel Advancing movement and how it changes lives transformed me in ways beyond what I could imagine. It has given me a new purpose and a clear mission to reach every teen, everywhere.”

David in Zambia

5

Implementing Youth Ministry's Missing Piece

So what does it take to get students to “go”? How can a leader transform a ministry from typical to Gospel Advancing?

As seasoned Gospel Advancing leaders can attest, the process is not easy, but it is simple. Youth leaders can infuse Gospel Advancing DNA into their group by focusing on four key action steps.

1. Embrace the **vision**.

In Jesus’s last encounter with His core followers recorded in the book of Matthew, He issued them a massive challenge:

‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’

Matthew 28:19-20

This charge—called the Great Commission or the Cause of Christ—extends to Jesus’s followers today, including teenagers, and is typical of the radical living He has always required of anyone who wants to be His disciple. For example, He told the Twelve that they must serve as He served (**John 13:12-15**). To the crowds around Him, He said:

‘And whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.’ **Luke 14:27**

Jesus’s discipleship approach contrasts sharply with that of typical modern youth groups, which tend to prioritize comfort over challenge and amusement over mission. Many are more apt to water down the message than call students up to a cause higher than themselves.

In response, some teens are leaving the faith. According to data from the Pew Research Center, more than 40% of teens who abandon Christianity do so not because of scandal or intellectual disagreement, but rather from boredom—a lack of interest in a church and a faith that's never expected anything from them.¹⁰

Called to the Cause

Gospel Advancing youth groups, however, give both students and leaders a bold vision to reach the teens in their schools and community with the Gospel. This vision unifies students and drives them to rely on each other and the Holy Spirit to accomplish it. It can also encourage them to disciple new believers and teach them how to share their faith.

“

We mobilized our youth leader network to come together for a community cause to help all teens in our area hear the Gospel. After one year, we went from just the 350 students in our youth groups regularly hearing the Gospel to 700—10% of the total students in the area!

Bill F.

When a faith community comes together to both live out and share the Gospel, teens develop a faith that sticks long after they age out of the youth group. As the authors of *The Great Opportunity* report concluded:¹¹

It turns out that being in a family and church that talks with Jesus—where they actively evangelize, serve together, know other adults that take their faith seriously, and live the Gospel and not sin management—will more often than not produce young people who want to continue on in a life with God.

2. Use the Cause Circle.

Gospel Advancing employs a simple approach to relational evangelism, called:

Prayer – Care – Share

In the Prayer – Care – Share approach, students are trained to:

- **pray** for non-Christians to trust in Christ for salvation.
- find ways to show the love of Jesus by **caring** for non-Christians.
- relationally **share** the Gospel with non-Christians, using both actions and words.

This way of interacting with people who do not share their faith helps students (or anyone) fulfill Jesus's instructions to make disciples of all nations. It is demonstrated throughout Scripture, but perhaps most succinctly in **Mark 1:35-42**, where we see Jesus pray for, care for, and share the Good News with those around Him:

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, **where He prayed [PRAYER]**. Simon and his companions went to look for Him, and when they found Him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!'*

*Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—**so I can preach there also [SHARE]**. That is why I have come.' So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.*

A man with leprosy came to Him and begged Him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.'

*Jesus was indignant. He reached out His hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' He said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him, and **he was cleansed [CARE]**.*

A simple visual called the Cause Circle depicts the Prayer – Care – Share approach:

The **Cause Circle arrows** indicate that this is a **continual process**—a **lifestyle** that teens adopt rather than linear steps they take to check off a box of sharing the Gospel with someone.



Hanging up a visual based on the Cause Circle and having students use sticky notes to put their friends' names on it gives me an idea of how well students are engaging their friends who don't know Christ and encourages them to keep up the good work.

Scott T.

Leaders must take two essential steps to ensure the Cause Circle lifestyle becomes a foundation of their ministry:

Set the pace.

As our research and focus-group discussions indicate, a leader who embraces and models a lifestyle of praying for, caring for, and sharing the Gospel with people in their own lives—and not just in the youth room—is one of the top three accelerants of Gospel Advancing ministry impact. This lifestyle is especially influential when leaders share with teenagers about their evangelism efforts, regardless of the success of the encounters. In addition, leaders can help students better understand the Gospel and how to share it by presenting the Gospel and inviting students to put their trust in Christ during every youth group meeting.

Train others.

The first practical step in implementing the Cause Circle is for a main leader to train other leaders in the ministry (both adult and student leaders) to live a Prayer – Care – Share lifestyle. Then together the leaders can train the whole group.

“

It starts with us! Once I began telling my teens about my own attempts to share Jesus at the grocery store or with my neighbor, they got curious—and brave.

Chris B.

Second, leaders should plan to make Prayer – Care – Share a standard part of their ministry all year long. To see what that looks like, read on.

3. Plan the year.

Ministries with the highest missional engagement and results infuse their calendar with planned, ongoing Gospel Advancing training and activation opportunities. The most successful ministries aim for:

- **ANNUAL catalytic event:** a camp, conference, or missions experience that trains and then activates students to relationally share their faith.
- **WEEKLY storytelling:** a few minutes as a group each week to tell Prayer – Care – Share stories, check in on goal progress, and pray for unbelievers. Also, the Gospel should be shared with the whole group each week as part of the meeting program.

“

When I first started helping with the youth group, we would have 12–15 on a good night. It was dead, and the teenagers did not know how nor want to get others to church or to share the Gospel. Six months later, we typically have 28–35 teenagers on a Wednesday night! We’ve had an influx of new students, and they’ve done a great job of getting others to come to youth group. Teaching them to share the Gospel has been a daunting task. They know how, but getting them to do it has been a chore. But we are making progress. It is definitely a night-and-day difference today versus what I first came into.

Anonymous

- **DAILY time in the Word:** an expectation for students and leaders to regularly spend individual time in Scripture and prayer, so that their faith-sharing flows out of a genuine relationship with God and a growing understanding of Him and His Word.

These three simple practices will enable a youth group to establish a strong, consistent Gospel Advancing foundation.

Other ways to bolster evangelism in a youth group include:

- **Quarterly evangelism training:** Taking teens through an evangelism-focused curriculum (visit dare2share.org/store to download free options) or Gospel-conversation role-play every few months strengthens their evangelism skills and confidence.
- **Monthly activation experience:** Regular opportunities for the group to put evangelism training into practice help students encourage one another and grow in their ability and desire to share the Gospel. For example, service projects that involve interaction with members of the community allow students to naturally engage in conversation-based evangelism.

For ideas and insight into what these program elements look like in practice, visit:

dare2share.org/ga-programming-guide



4. Measure the **results**.

Tracking the group's progress motivates both leaders and students—and it is biblical, as long as ministries are measuring spiritual outcomes, not just the number of students in the seats. For example, **Acts 2:41** records 3,000 new believers and baptisms after Peter preaches at Pentecost, and **Acts 2:42-47** reports regular meetings, prayers, miracles, giving, and daily salvations.

”

We have a ping-pong wall, and each week students put different-colored ping-pong balls in the wall based on sharing their faith, praying with someone, helping someone in need, and leading someone to Christ. As the wall grows, so does our enthusiasm.

Anonymous

Examples of outcomes to measure include:

- # of total Gospel conversations.
- # of salvations.
- # of baptisms.
- # of students discipling other students.
- # of students consistently reading the Bible on their own.

Groups often find it helpful to display progress toward their goals. For example, one ministry might have a clear jar that they add a marble to for each Gospel conversation a group member has, while another might display a giant Cause Circle with sticky notes containing the initials of each person who heard the Gospel from a group member.

Aim for multiplication.

As ministries consistently implement the Gospel Advancing approach, they begin to see results. Leaders can multiply those results by:

- equipping and encouraging students to train their own friends and new believers in a Prayer – Care – Share lifestyle.
- inviting other youth leaders in the community to implement a Gospel Advancing approach in their own ministries, so that groups can work together to reach every teen in the community with the Gospel.

For guidance on connecting with other leaders, visit:

dare2share.org/gospel-advancing-ministry/how-to-create-a-gospel-advancing-network



“

[Gospel Advancing] didn't impact just our ministry—it really changed our relationship with the other churches and other youth ministries in our city. God has really blessed these partnerships, as we've been able to see students collectively share Christ with our city.

Luke L.



Don't Miss It!

Teens encountering Jesus.

Students' lives transformed by the power of the Gospel.

*A vibrant ministry, brimming with youth excited about **their faith in Christ**.*

As ministries around the world **embrace Gospel Advancing practices**, results like these are indeed within reach. Success will hinge on leaders catching the bold vision of teenagers everywhere hearing the Gospel from one of their peers and adapting Gospel Advancing methods to their cultural contexts and ministry styles.

Today, **we challenge you to become one of those leaders**—one who sees the power of the Gospel and the potential of teenagers. One who is willing to call young people to something higher. One who is eager to be a part of a mighty movement of God in this generation.

Don't miss it!

Join the Gospel Advancing movement today.

Visit dare2share.org/join/ to get started.

Sign up to receive ongoing training, encouragement, and a free weekly newsletter that will connect you with other Gospel Advancing leaders around the world.



Resource the movement!

You can also accelerate the movement by helping get free Gospel Advancing training and resources into the hands of leaders worldwide.

Explore giving opportunities at: dare2share.org/donate/.



Get equipped!

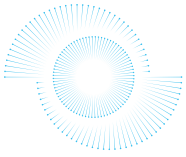
To download free Gospel Advancing resources for yourself and your ministry, visit: dare2share.org/store/.



Read more about it:

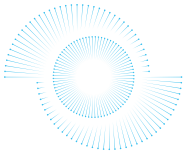
Download the free e-book *Gospelize Your Youth Ministry*.





Footnotes

- ¹ *The Great Opportunity: The American Church in 2050*, p. 13–27. 2018, Pinetops Foundation. greatopportunity.org.
- ² *The FYI Report on Youth Leader Burnout and Wellbeing*, p. 6. 2025, Fuller Youth Institute. Pasadena, California: Fuller Theological Seminary. fulleryouthinstitute.org.
- ³ *Global Youth Culture: Insights from a Digital Generation*, p. 14. 2020, OneHope. Pompano, Florida. onehope.net.
- ⁴ *Gen Alpha: The Next Generation*, p. 10–13. 2024, OneHope. Pompano, Florida. onehope.net.
- ⁵ *The Open Generation*. 2022, Barna. Fort Worth, Texas. Available at barna.com/the-open-generation/open-to-jesus/. Accessed 6.25.25.
- ⁶ 2024 world population, ages 10–19: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2024 Revision. (Medium variant). populationpyramid.net.
- ⁷ *Global Youth Culture*, p. 6–8.
- ⁸ *Gen Alpha*, p. 10.
- ⁹ “The Teen Brain: 7 Things to Know,” National Institute of Mental Health, a division of National Institutes of Health. NIH Publication No. 23-MH-8078. Revised 2023. nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know. Accessed 6.25.25.
- ¹⁰ *The Great Opportunity*, p. 55.
- ¹¹ *The Great Opportunity*, p. 59.



About the Survey

In 2023, Clarity Research distributed a **38-question survey** (*A Generation in Reach*) to youth leaders around the globe. **513 unique, usable responses** came in from 47 countries, spanning different denominations and group sizes (median youth group size = 25; average youth group size = 153; some respondents did not indicate the size of their group).

The survey's primary objective was to answer the question:

Does a Gospel Advancing ministry approach consistently create disciple multipliers?

After the survey, Dare 2 Share conducted a **5-city focus group tour** to validate the data and get deeper insights.

Notes about the *A Generation in Reach* survey:

- The survey assessed the performance of youth groups—not individual youth ministers, volunteers, or students.
- The survey included questions in five areas of measurement:
 - questions to identify ministries and programs that are influencing the youth group and the group's level of engagement with the ministry offerings of Dare 2 Share.
 - questions to determine the commitment to and implementation of the seven Gospel Advancing values.
 - questions to determine the impact of the values since the time they were implemented.
 - questions to determine the general performance and impact of the youth group in terms of attendance and new believers.
 - questions to determine the magnitude and effectiveness of mobilization of youth for evangelism.
- The survey also included demographic questions, regarding the age, gender, education, and experience of the respondent, as well as the denomination or religious tradition of the youth group.

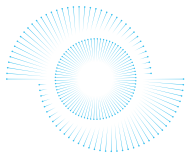
For more information about the survey and its results, visit dontmissit.org.

About Clarity Research

Since 2009, Atlanta-based Clarity Research, led by founder Scott Friderich, has used market research methods to help clients develop reliable information for effective strategy and product development.

For more information, visit clarity-research.net.





Definitions

Gospel

See page 42.

Relational evangelism

Sharing the Gospel through conversations, especially with friends and peers.

Gospel Advancing leader

A leader who shares the Gospel personally and mobilizes teenagers to do the same.

Gospel Advancing youth group

A group that consistently trains and activates teenagers to relationally share the Gospel and prioritizes disciple multiplication, including students discipling other students.

Typical youth group

One that does not consistently train and activate teenagers to relationally share the Gospel.

Disciple-multiplication strategy

A ministry approach in which teenagers are disciplined in their faith and trained not only to share the Gospel with their peers who have not trusted in Christ, but also to train other students—including those they've led to Christ—how to grow in their faith and share the Gospel as well.

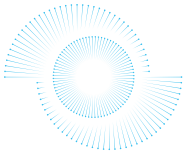
Gospel Advancing intercessory prayer

Praying for unsaved people to be saved and for saved people to share the Gospel.

Cause Circle

A visual representation of a lifestyle in which believers seek to fulfill the Cause of Christ (making disciples; **Matthew 28:18-20**) by praying for people who have not yet trusted in Jesus for salvation, intentionally caring for their needs, and relationally sharing the Gospel with them in conversation. Also called Prayer – Care – Share.





Gospel Advancing Foundations

More than a decade ago, Dare 2 Share Ministries commissioned a research study to evaluate how well youth groups across the United States were doing with evangelism. Analysis of the findings revealed that the most effective youth groups embodied seven important values, which became the foundation of the Gospel Advancing ministry approach. All seven of the values are demonstrated in the Bible, especially the Gospels and the book of Acts.

7 Gospel Advancing Values

VALUE 1: Intercessory prayer fuels it.

Intercessory prayer is the engine of a Gospel Advancing ministry. When prayer is a priority, teenagers are transformed spiritually, and they learn to leverage the same unstoppable prayer power on behalf of their campuses, classmates, and communities. (**Acts 4:31**)

VALUE 2: Relational evangelism drives it.

Mobilizing teens to lovingly and intentionally reach other teens with the Good News of Jesus is vital. Teens who engage in relational evangelism experience firsthand the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. (**Colossians 4:4-6, Romans 1:16**)

VALUE 3: Leaders fully embrace and model it.

What's true of Jesus is true of a youth leader. If students are going to prioritize relational evangelism, leaders must consistently set the pace personally. (**Luke 6:40**)

VALUE 4: A disciple-multiplication strategy guides it.

A youth group discipleship strategy should follow the same pattern that Jesus modeled, with leaders making disciples who make disciples—who in turn make disciples. (**Matthew 4:19-21, Acts 19:8-10**)

VALUE 5: A bold vision focuses it.

Establishing a bold ministry vision that can be accomplished only in God's strength inspires an entire group. It gives everyone something to push for, pray for, and praise God for. The biggest, boldest, best vision ever articulated is found in **Acts 1:8**.

VALUE 6: Biblical outcomes measure it.

The New Testament is full of examples of how the early Church measured results. When leaders measure the right outcomes, it provides a gauge to assess progress, identify weaknesses, and spot opportunities for even more growth. (**Acts 2:42-47**)

VALUE 7: Ongoing programs reflect it.

Youth groups schedule their priorities. When intercessory prayer, evangelism, and disciple multiplication are real priorities for a youth group, meeting rundowns, weekly schedules, and annual calendars all reflect that. (**Acts 6:2-4**)

5 Truths

The Gospel Advancing movement is a growing and diverse community of leaders. As we work together to see every teen, everywhere, hear the Gospel from a friend, we intentionally focus on these 5 truths that unite us in those efforts and not on issues that might divide us.

GOD

We believe in one God, eternally and sovereignly existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

GOD'S SON

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the second person of the Trinity. Being fully God and fully man, He offers salvation through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious bodily resurrection to all who believe in Him and receive His gift of grace.

GOD'S SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, who was fully active in the creation of the world and is fully active in the regeneration of those who put their faith in Jesus.

GOD'S WORD

Inspired by God and written by men, God's Word is inerrant and true, making it our reliable authority in all things.

The GOSPEL

The Gospel (*Good News of Jesus*) tells the whole story of creation, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. It's a clear and simple message that deeply and profoundly impacts those who receive it by faith. This six-sentence acrostic is one way to summarize the Gospel:

God created us to be with Him. **Genesis 1-2**

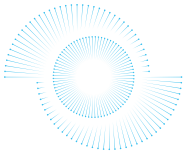
Our sins separate us from God. **Genesis 3**

Sins cannot be removed by good deeds. **Genesis 3 – Malachi 4**

Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. **Matthew – Luke**

Everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. **John**

Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. **Acts – Revelation**



Recommended Gospel Advancing Tools

Gospelize Your Youth Ministry by Greg Stier. Available in hard copy, e-book, and audiobook.

dare2share.org/gospelize/



Life in 6 Words faith-sharing and Gospel Advancing encouragement app.

li6w.com

Download and print Gospel-acrostic faith-sharing cards at:

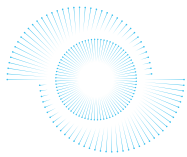
store.dare2share.org/products/digital-life-in-6-words-gospel-cards



Download free Gospel Advancing student curriculum and leader-training resources at

dare2share.org/store.

Discover and register for Gospel Advancing student-activation and leader-training events at dare2share.org/events.



About Dare 2 Share Ministries

In 1991, a young, U.S.-based pastor named Greg Stier had a vision to see teens sharing their faith and reaching their world for Christ. From this vision, Dare 2 Share Ministries was born.

Since then, Greg and the ministry of Dare 2 Share have impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of teens around the world, motivating and equipping them to relationally reach people with the Gospel message.

Today, Dare 2 Share is making a global impact for God's Kingdom by leading a movement of Gospel Advancing leaders worldwide, equipping them with tools to train students in their ministries to share the Gospel with other teenagers in their spheres of influence—until *every teen, everywhere, hears the Gospel from a friend*.

Learn more at dare2share.org.





dare 2 share

Join the Gospel Advancing
movement at:

dare2share.org/join

