

You Have Permission!!

An Asset-Based Experience for Emerging Generations

A wise man once wrote “Asset-based approaches to congregational life can be key ingredients in the continuing reformation of the church.” This workshop is designed to include an important group in that reformation, youth and young adults.

God has been gracious and plentiful in giving gifts to our church’s younger generations, but over the last few decades the church has had less and less influence on the worldview and life development of these emerging generations. As a result, youth and young adults can no longer be overlooked as contributors to the life and health of the church.

You Have Permission is designed to assist your congregation’s younger members realize possibilities and opportunities for ministry. Yes, *YHP* can be a career exploration tool, but the key connection is to help emerging generations match vocation and avocation with career and ministry. By exploring together as equals, an intergenerational experience can begin to link the gifts of multiple generations within the same congregation.

Emerging generations are defined as Generation X and younger, or put another way: individuals who have been born since 1961. Because these younger minds are molded differently than any other group of minds in our church’s history, some of the techniques described in this workshop may seem unorthodox. These experiences are intended as a stretching point, with the goal of finding places where younger individuals may want to plug in or connect. These opportunities may ones you expect or they may be highly unusual. Try the experiences and opportunities out, and don’t be afraid to change something to fit your particular setting. This workshop comes to you with our best wishes. Enjoy this time of learning and sharing.

The DCM Stewardship Team

Audience

The primary focus of this design is to connect with youth and young adults. An intergenerational audience of youth, young adults and older adults can also be appropriate. In this design, the term *youth* will refer to individuals between the ages of 14 and 18. The term *young adult* will refer to individuals in the age group between 18 and 25. The design builds in time to talk in small groups within an individual's generation as well as intergenerationally and in the entire group. With adaptation, it may also be helpful for specialized groups such as pastors' conferences, participants in first-call theological education and participants in stewardship training events.

Outcomes

Here's what you can expect to happen as participants engage in this workshop. They will:

1. Get more excited about the *possibilities* that are already in place for them as they think about their lives and careers.
2. Build self-awareness and an ability to see assets, potentials and capabilities in themselves where perhaps only a lack of ability was seen before.
3. Feel gratitude for God's blessings and for each other's gifts.
4. Encourage conversation on a multi-generational level about the gifts that God has given each individual member of the Kingdom and in what areas of life those assets might be used.
5. Look forward to talking to other leaders, mentors and potentially helpful sources of life direction.

You will need:

- Newsprint, preferably the PostIt™ type that will stick on the walls of the room where the workshop takes place. You'll need at least 40 sheets, so two full newsprint pads might be necessary.
- Package of PostIt™ notes, one per participant.
- Water-soluble markers, one per participant.
- Bibles (preferably the Contemporary English Version [CEV]), one per participant.

- Stacks of current magazines, several pairs of scissors and glue sticks.

Some congregational groups may want to also provide:

- Copies of the book, **The Great Permission*, one per participant.
- Optional note cards or scratch paper, several per participant

**Order books from Augsburg Fortress, 800.328.9648. ISBN 6-0001-6960-4. 1-5 copies: \$6.00 each. 6 or more copies: \$5.00 each.*

Getting Ready

To prepare for leading this workshop, you should:

1. Read this whole design, noting places where you will need extra time and thought for preparation.
2. Obtain a stack of current magazines for use during the workshop. Titles that might be selected include: *GQ, Esquire, People, Newsweek, Vibe, Fast Company, Inc. PC World*. Virtually any current title will work, as long as it features photos of people at work.
3. Arrive at the site early enough to put 10-20 sheets of newsprint on the walls of the workshop space. An alternative could be to place the sheets on the floor of the room in easy-to-get-to locations. You'll need these at the very beginning of the workshop. If appropriate, place a magazine or two and a glue stick near each sheet.
4. Spread packages of PostIt™ notes around room. Make sure they are easily accessible.

Schedule

Welcome Activity	20 minutes
Introduction	10 minutes
Bible Conversation	20 minutes
Personal Asset Map/Peer Review	35 minutes
Making A Plan	20 minutes
Question & Answer	10 minutes
Closing prayer	5 minutes
Total:	110 minutes

WORKSHOP DESIGN

Welcome Activity

(20 minutes)

As participants arrive, ask them to find a large sheet of newsprint and to map a career or job they admire or the career of someone they admire. Encourage participants to describe as many activities or skills that are a part of this career or job as possible, using words, pictures, and clippings from the magazines that you provided. Visual representations are best, but words also work. Encourage each participant to select a job that no one else in the room is doing, and spark the map-making conversation with questions like "What would that person do first thing in the morning?", "How would someone get started in a career/job like this?", "When would this person know they had achieved success?", "What other kinds of jobs/people would this career interact with?" and "What other jobs might be similar to this?" After a few minutes, ask the participants to find someone near them and to walk through their career map, telling what people in that career do on a daily basis. Encourage team participation to further develop a detailed map of each career or job. If time remains, suggest that each person develop a second career picture.

Introduction

(10 minutes)

After welcoming participants, tell them that in the next 75-80 minutes they will work on the task of envisioning their future in a way that they may not have seen before. Participants have been spending the last 15-20 minutes getting to know a little about what careers/jobs are admired by people in the room. It's important to assess at this point how many careers are present and what kind of possibilities the participants are oriented toward. Be sure to ask the group about the skills that professionals in this position might use on a daily basis. Write new suggestions on the newsprint for each position.

Bible conversation

(25 minutes)

Distribute Bibles to all participants, directing them to the Mark 6 version of the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30 - 44). Ask participants to listen to you read the story aloud (from the Contemporary English Version [CEV] for its particular emphases). Their job is to "hear themselves into the story."

When you have completed your reading, ask participants to read the story again, this time silently from their own Bibles. Their task: To decide their answers to these questions:

- If you had been present in the story, who or what would you have been? (On the basis of similarities in events, life circumstance, personality or spiritual qualities, who are you in the story?)
- What skills of yours would you use if you WERE in the story?
- What skills from the career/job newsprint sheets might have been useful?

After five minutes or less, direct participants to find one other person, preferably someone they don't know that well, and to share their answers to the three questions. They will have about ten minutes for this task.

The object of the conversations: To talk with one other person about your personal faith walk, and to begin to become aware of what skills/abilities/assets that each of us have. In some conversations, the threads will weave a cord of mutual understanding; in others, the bits and pieces of back-and-forth will yield understanding about rich gifts and multiple assets; in still others, there will be the shadows of doubt or confessions of shortcomings. In all conversations, the witness of God's hand in our lives will be revealed.

After 7 or 8 minutes, ask the pairs to talk about what Jesus had to work with in the story. Encourage the pairs to read through the story again, this time looking for all of the "raw materials" that get used in the story.

If time remains in this segment of the workshop, collect participants back together, and tally the number of participants who saw themselves in each of the roles in the story. (For example, "How many of you saw yourself as the disciples? Why?" "How many of you saw yourself as the loaves and fishes?" Why not?") Then tally the various "raw materials".

Personal Asset Map/Peer Review (35 minutes)

During the next thirty five minutes, participants will depict themselves in a *Personal Asset Map*.

Tell participants that the next part of the process will mirror the career maps they did a few minutes ago, only this time, the maps will depict the assets that each of them have been given by God.

1. Distribute a sheet of newsprint to each participant and ask them to write their name at the top of the sheet.
2. Next, distribute a package of PostIt™ notes to each participant and ask them to begin to write down, one per PostIt™, the things they are good at doing. Encourage participants to include as much detail as possible, but to remember to only write one item per note. Continue the task until each participant has 10-20 notes.

Along the way, stimulate the discovery of other assets by asking questions like:

- What do you like to do that's useful?
- What really brings out your passion?"
- What kinds of issues or causes are really important to you?
- What experience do you have that might be useful?
- What experience do you have that you really enjoyed?
- What gives you the strongest sense of self-satisfaction?
- What are you interested in, but maybe don't know much about?
- What is your family passionate about?
- What groups/clubs/organizations do you belong to?
- What's a crazy idea you've had that you've always wanted to try?

Facilitator's NOTE: You might want to write these questions on a sheet of newsprint before the workshop starts!

NOTE: Experience has shown that youth groups will need a little extra time to begin to see their assets as things that have value and are useful. You may want to include some

discussion about what is a useful thing to be good at and what the things they are good at could be used for! Make sure that the overall tone is encouraging!

3. After 10 minutes or less, ask participants to begin to try to group their individual assets aiming toward some kind of job or career. A statement like "Now, what career or job could you do with these assets?" often works well. Give each job/career a name and write it on your Personal Asset Map. Feel free to come up with more than one career or job.
4. Tell participants they should be ready to talk with the members of their group about their answers, and to come to some agreement about the qualities necessary to work in this kind of career.

For participants' reference, write the question, "What kind of people might act or think this way?" on newsprint or chalkboard.

At about the ten minute mark, suggest to participants that they complete their mapping and move to the sharing of ideas. After another fifteen minutes, bring the discussion to a close.

Use the remaining ten minutes to gather the insights of the group together in a visible way. On newsprint or chalkboard, record quickly what the individual groups have come to see as personal traits, skills or knowledge that characterize the people in the individual groups. Make note of which skills those individuals would understand, value or practice as elements of an asset-based approach to these careers or jobs. Match up individual participants with these qualities.

NOTE: This discussion encourages individuals to relate what they believe to be true about themselves and to encourage them to be open to the insights and observations of the other participants in the group. The facilitator MUST keep the discussion positive, encouraging and fun.

During this discussion, individual participants should keep track of the wisdom of the group on their Personal Asset Map. Organize these thoughts in a list, or a map of ideas. Think of categories – personality, skills, experience – or write specific

assets as they are discussed. Be sure to indicate in some way – check marks, “ditto” or attached thought balloons – where a particular emphasis is repeated. This affords the group a measure of the strength of a particular trait or life skill represented here.

Save just a few minute for participants to offer general observations about patterns, trend, connections that they see in this “map”. Key in on the observations that surprised participants and encourage participants to risk a little of themselves by sharing what they’ve seen.

Making A Plan

(20 minutes)

The last activity in the workshop builds on the newly-named assets of each individual. It will also help identify what next step might be appropriate and available to the situation.

1. Explain the difference between a gift and an asset. A gift is something given and received. An asset is given and received as well, but *then it's put to use!* (See the book *The Great Permission* for examples. Especially look at Case Study 4, *Explaining "assets"*, and *Other ways to say "asset"* on page 34.)
2. Point out that everyone in the room has gifts, and it's likely that everyone also has assets, too. Quickly summarize some of the possibilities for turning gifts into assets that you see around the room.
3. Ask each participant to choose 5-6 of his/her assets and to make a decision about how to put them to use. Then have the participants group themselves in pairs or triads—this works especially well intergenerationally. Suggest that the small group talk about how their perception of themselves may have changed since the workshop began. They might even want to prominently list assets they didn't know they had on their Personal Asset Maps.
4. The pairs and triads should then determine a next step for using the assets that they've identified. Appropriate next steps could be things like:
 - continuing a conversation about on-going asset identification between the pair,
 - looking for a joint asset-enhancing project,

- mapping out a plan to explore a particular career or looking for additional partnerships for some other asset-exploring event. (See *The Great Permission* for some ideas that might be able to be adapted to this situation.)
5. Ask each pair or triad to commit to a date by which your next step will be accomplished. Mention that by that date the teams will likely have also determined another successive next step.

Question & Answer

(10 minutes)

Before closing, take as many as 10 minutes to debrief or answer any questions that might come from the participants. Any and all questions are fair game.

Closing prayer

(5 minutes)

End the workshop with prayers of thanks specific to the people who have attended, and to those assets that participants may have just discovered. Remember to encourage the participants to do most of the praying!

VARIATIONS AND EXTRA ACTIVITIES

You may want to expand this workshop into a longer format, or use individual activities here over a longer period of time – such as in an adult forum. Consider these variations and other activities for reaching the same outcomes:

1. Ask a variety of congregational members to be participate in *You Have Permission!!* alongside the youth and young adults. A broad spectrum of ideas and experiences can spur insights and ideas that might otherwise be overlooked. This might begin to create a multi-generational culture and encourage participation beyond this one-time event.
2. As an intermediate step between mapping the career or job of someone participants admire, take a few minutes to map the characteristics of Jesus, or another character from Scripture. Be sure to map the particular qualities that are on display in specific stories. Pay close attention to minor

characters like the beggar healed at Bethesda or the centurion whose son was healed on Jesus command. The more detailed the map can be, the more insight that will be gained. A good suggestion is to consider ahead of time which characters to be mapped and to every member of the group map the same individual(s).

3. Use multimedia to support some phases of the workshop. For example, there are several scenes from movies that can enhance understanding of the particular steps. One such example is from the comedy *The Three Amigos*. Near the end of the movie, the Three Amigos ask the townspeople in a small Mexican village what they are good at and what they can do. This is a great example of looking for personal assets—along with a hilarious reaction to what those assets actually are!! (10 minutes)

Another example is from *The Matrix*. In the opening few minutes of that film, Morpheus (played by Lawrence Fishburne) asks Neo (played by Keanu Reeves) to make a decision that will have long-lasting effects on his future. He hints at the magnitude of change that the decision will lead to, and then asks Neo to choose. This scene fits nicely when encouraging participants to choose to put their assets to work. (10 minutes)

4. Take next steps that follow the activities of this workshop, such as deciding how you will expand asset-awareness beyond this participant group.
5. Lengthen any of the activities over a longer period of time, extending discussion and sharing to a deeper level and allowing for more give-and-take.
6. You might want to do an artifact hunt, looking for examples around the congregation of people using their assets. A pictorial directory can also be useful for identifying individuals and commenting on what their assets are and how they might use them. Avoid crossing the line into gossip or negativity though! Good follow up questions after identifying a particular asset-holder might include:
 - “How do you know?”

- “What’s behind all this?”
 - “How does this artifact match your experience?”
(30 minutes more)
7. In the Bible conversation time, add a little more depth talking about what assets are being put to use in other stories from Scripture. Suggestions might include:
 - Samson & Delilah (Judges 13-15)
 - David & Goliath
 - David, Bathsheba & Nathan (2 Samuel 11-12)
 - Jesus Miracles
 - Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 40 and following)
 You could also build in some conversation about how the people in the stories decided to put their assets to use.
 8. To add a little drama to the Bible conversations, you might ask groups of participants who have associated themselves with a particular character or object to defend their way of thinking, being or acting as though taking on that Bible character’s views. (15 minutes)
 9. Develop some fill-in-the-blank or sentence completion exercises like: “If I put this asset to use, then I might be able to _____ next week at school/work.” Another possibility: “If I put this asset to use every day, _____ would become very easy for me.”
 10. Photocopy several readings from *The Great Permission* onto standard-sized copy paper, leaving wide margins for comments. Ask participants to read the photocopied reading(s) in the context of putting their personal assets to use, and to write their questions and comments in the margins. Talk together about what you have learned or what you want to ask each other. (20 minutes)
 11. Write or draw metaphors for asset-based thinking in developing a worldview. Start participants’ thoughts with some examples or prompts such as: “You can recognize someone who is using their assets because he or she is like a _____.” Post participants’ work in a place visible to all congregation members.

12. Write together some prayers that could be offered over several weeks, by prayer groups or as part of the general prayers in worship.