

Musing, Meaning-making and ministering as Pathways to Religious Education

De la Salle Dasmaringas

November 11, 2017





**First order of
the day:
Musing**



**Musing on
young
people today**

MAY 28, 2012
Obama's New Boss / Syria face-off / McCain vs. Brzezinski / PLUS: Summer's best movies & more

TIME

THE ME ME ME GENERATION

Millennials are lazy, entitled narcissists
who still live with their parents

Why they'll save us all

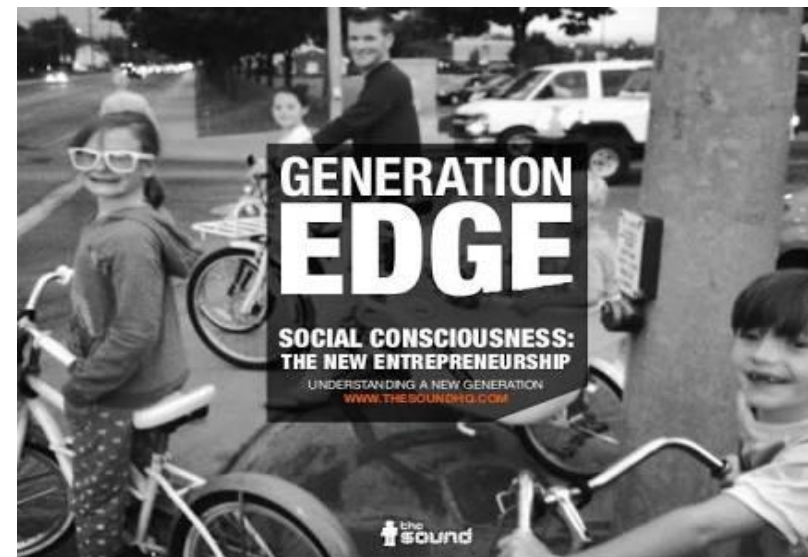
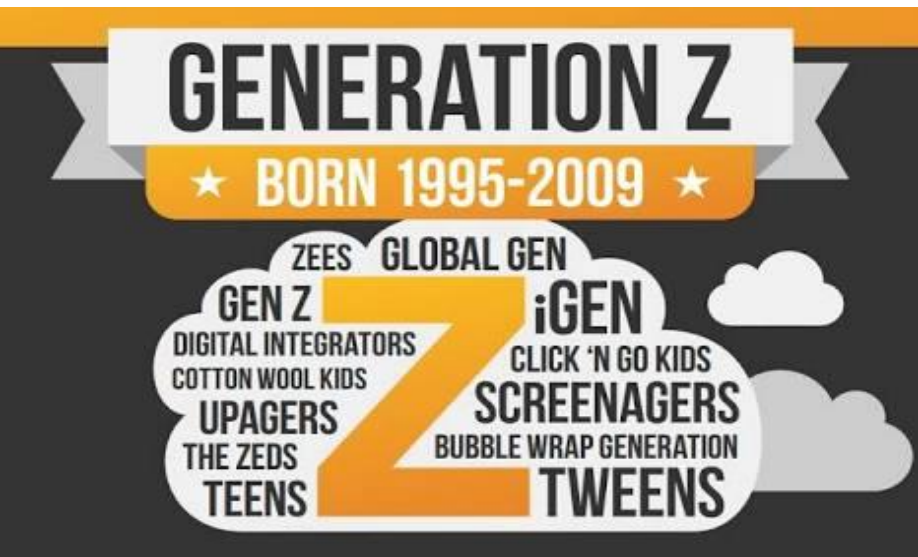
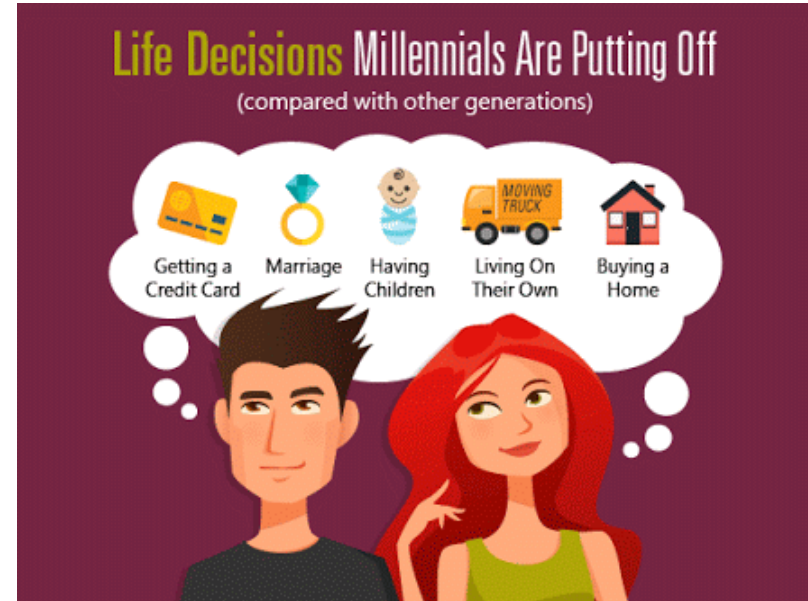
BY JOEL STEIN



Musing on young
people today

We have heard
and read about
the names given to
young people
today.

Musing on young people today



meh.

Musing on young people today

Young people are immersed in the so-called "meh" culture

meh.

Musing on young people today

"There's a rampant apathy in today's society, especially among young people, who have been formed not to embrace anything as objectively true." (Bishop Barron)

2. WEH

WEH?? DI NGA ???

Musing on young people today



SBNR.org
Spiritual But Not Religious



SBNR.org
Spiritual But Not Religious

Spiritual; includes thinking and feelings about transcendence; ideas about a creator or creative force in the cosmos; human values; sense of meaning and purpose to life; love and care for self and others; sense of stewardship for the earth and its flora and fauna; the aesthetic.

Religious: being spiritual in a particular way as informed by the beliefs, practices and traditions of a religious group. It usually includes a sense of personal relationship with god, belief in an afterlife and identification with, and participation in a local religious community.

Journal of Religious Education 58(3) 2010, p.6



SBNR

- Ariana Grande:

“I’ve always been a little bit of everything when it comes to religion... Nobody knows this, but I also meditate every day and do spiritual energy work. So I’m kind of all over the place as far as religion and spirituality go, but I like it all.”



SBNR

- Justin Timberlake:

“I think the term for me would be more
spiritual than religious.”

SBNR



- Beyoncé:

“I am about faith and spirituality more so than religion. Doing right by others and not judging.”

SBNR



SBNR.org
Spiritual But Not Religious

Eighty-five per cent of the SBNR agree that religions bring conflict and 82 per cent say that religious people are too intolerant.

SBNR



SBNR.org
Spiritual But Not Religious

About a quarter of U.S. adults (27%) now say they think of themselves as spiritual but not religious.

Pew Research Center,
September 6, 2017

<http://www.pewresearch.org>



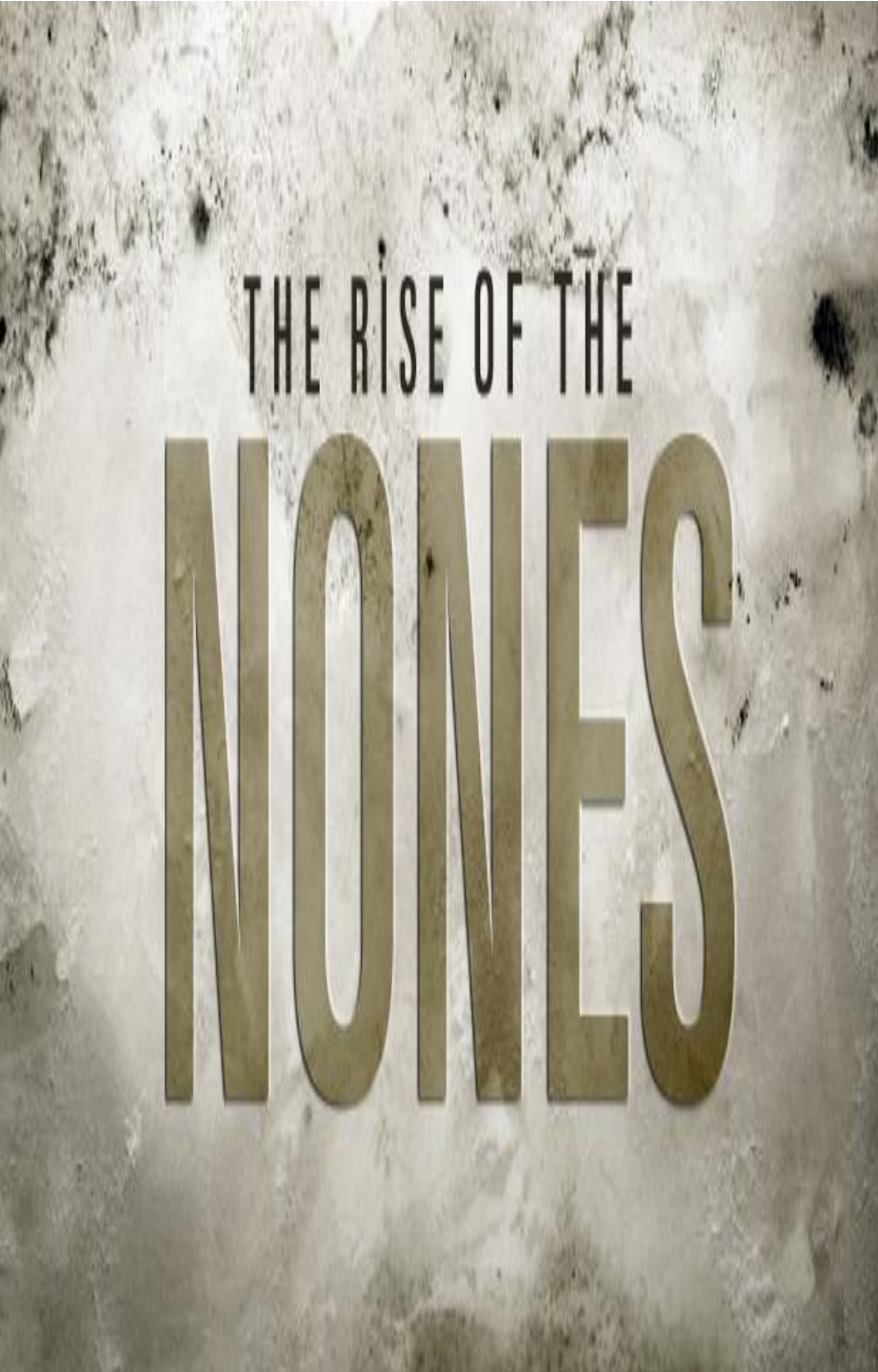
SBNR.org
Spiritual But Not Religious

In the 2009 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 29 per cent of young people under the age of 30 described themselves as 'spiritual but not religious' compared with just 10 per cent of people aged 60 and over in the 2009 Australian survey.

Christian Research Association
<https://cra.org.au/spiritual-but-not-religious/>

THE RISE OF THE

NONES

The image shows the cover of a book titled 'The Rise of the Nones'. The background is a textured, light-colored surface, possibly stone or concrete, with some dark spots. The title 'THE RISE OF THE NONES' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. 'THE RISE OF THE' is in a smaller font size and is positioned above the word 'NONES', which is significantly larger and more prominent. The text is in a dark, muted green color.

THE RISE OF THE
NONES

Musing on young people today

The 'nones': People who check the "none" box on surveys or polls asking for their religious affiliation.

Erica Long, In HDS, the nones are greater than one,
December, 2014

NONE ZONE



THE NATION IS CHANGING:
The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace.


 **20%** marked "None" for their religious affiliations
Up from 8% in two decades
10/9/12 Pew Research Center's Forum


1 in 5 U.S. adults say they have no religious affiliation

Portland, OR and Seattle, WA are less religious than **Las Vegas**
2010 U.S. Religion Census: <http://rcs2010.org/>


"THE RISE OF THE NONES!"
Read about it at markmoder.com

&
a staggering **1 in 3** adults under 30
<http://pewresearch.org/>

 **25%**
The Pacific Northwest has been dubbed "The None Zone" for its high percentage of people with no religious affiliation.
<http://crosscut.com/2009/09/28/mosback/19260/Get-This-None-Zone>


Youth Dynamics
Dynamic Relationships - Challenging Experiences
Impacting the None Zone

www.yd.org

Musing on young people today

Nearly eight-in-ten Millennials with low levels of religious commitment describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular."

Pew Research Center, "The factors driving the growth of religious 'nones' in the US, September, 2016



THE RISE OF THE
NONES

Musing on young people today

The growth of the “nones” may simply indicate that people who are not religious are becoming more forthright and willing to say they have no religious affiliation, perhaps because being a “none” has become more socially acceptable (Smith and Cooperman, 2016),

Second order
of the day:



**MEANING
MAKING**



What do all these mean to Religious Educators?

If religious education is to be a credible subject in the curriculum, then it needs to engage students with nothing less than the same sort of intellectual challenges that they accept as normal in other key learning areas. In other words, it needs to be academically challenging (Rossiter, 2010).



What do all these mean to Religious Educators?

A critical evaluative approach has a strong New Testament basis. Central to Jesus' praxis was addressing the social and religious problems that people faced. (**Rossiter, 2010**).

What do all these mean to Religious Educators?



The critical interpretation and evaluation of social issues should not be limited to religious education; it should enter into learning areas across the whole curriculum (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006)

Concrete Example

The Black Death arrived in Europe by sea in October 1347 when 12 Genoese trading ships docked at the Sicilian port of Messina after a long journey through the Black Sea. The people who gathered on the docks to greet the ships were met with a horrifying surprise: Most of the sailors aboard the ships were dead, and those who were still alive were gravely ill. They were overcome with fever, unable to keep food down and delirious from pain. Strangest of all, they were covered in mysterious black boils that oozed blood and pus and gave their illness its name: the “Black Death.”

Social Studies

Today, scientists understand that the Black Death, now known as the plague, is spread by a bacillus called *Yersinia pestis*. (The French biologist Alexandre Yersin discovered this germ at the end of the 19th century.) They know that the bacillus travels from person to person pneumonically, or through the air, as well as through the bite of infected fleas and rats. Both of these pests could be found almost everywhere in medieval Europe, but they were particularly at home aboard ships of all kinds

Science

Because they did not understand the biology of the disease, many people believed that the Black Death was a kind of divine punishment—retribution for sins against God such as greed, blasphemy, heresy, fornication and worldliness. By this logic, the only way to overcome the plague was to win God’s forgiveness. Some people believed that the way to do this was to purge their communities of heretics and other troublemakers—so, for example, many thousands of Jews were massacred in 1348 and 1349

Theology



What do all these mean to Religious Educators?

Academic subject approach: Religious Education should be considered as a serious academic pursuit. (Kenyon, 2010)



What do all these mean to Religious Educators?

Critical inquiry:
Sponsoring a spirit of
critical inquiry was
particularly important for
the students of today. And
was regarded as a good
indicator of successful
teaching (Kenyon, 2010)



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry (Swartz and Graeme, 2003).
 - Program-centered ministry *focuses on the production of quality programs with the intention of drawing large crowds of young people.*



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

1. **Complement program-centered and message – centered ministries with relational ministry.**
 - *Message centered evangelism emphasizes the proclamation of truth, in the hope that the repetition of the biblical message in creative ways will result in Christian living.*



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.
 - *Relationship-centered ministry recognizes the need of young people to interact with both the message and the messenger.*



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

1. **Complement program-centered and message – centered ministries with relational ministry.**
 - *It's not enough to give good talks, or organize elaborate programs. Teachers need to give themselves as well, and in so doing earn the right to share the gospel with young people.*



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

- 1. Complement program-centered and message – centered ministries with relational ministry.**

Adults forging friendships with young people, entering their world and earning the right to model the life of Christ to them is what *relational ministry* is all about.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

1. Complement program-centered and message – centered ministries with relational ministry.

This approach is consistent with the charism of 21st century Catholic Schools which is building a culture of relationships (Cook and Simmonds, 2011)

Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

“God reveals through concrete experiences of life and our life stories are bound up in the Christian Story with an inherent revelatory power to mediate and manifest God’s presence” (Groom, 1991).



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Manternach (2009) considers autobiographical stories particularly expressive genre since “they are constructed from our lived experience,” thus, they “form learners because of the deep connections that are possible in the relationship fostered between learner and teacher”.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Autobiographical stories are included and shared with learners as

- a meaningful planned contribution to the sequenced curricular story found in a textbook or syllabus or
- they emerge from the dialogical reflective process of teaching itself (Manternach,2009) .



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Fostering intentional and systematic reflection upon autobiographical stories we tell is important because they:

1. are a powerful medium for communicating the Christian story;
2. incarnate a biblical or traditional principle under discussion.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Fostering intentional and systematic reflection upon autobiographical stories we tell is important because they:

3. Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective:

- **Expressive:** The stories we tell show others what we believe and value about our self, others, the world, and God. They express to others who we are as Christian persons and witnesses.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective:

- **Formative:** Storytelling forms the educator as well as the learner. Telling and retelling our stories shape us as persons in an ever deeper way and further develops our sense of self-definition and way of being in the world.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective:

- **Formative:** Autobiographical accounts are powerful sources of formation when they reinforce or emphasize biblical principles or an understanding of the tradition.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective:

- **Formative:**

Caveat: As religious educators we might pause to self-monitor the stories we share and examine how these stories shape us and also lead learners to new self-understanding in their own faith journey.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story-telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories, as a moral activity, has three dynamics shaping our work as religious educators: expressive, formative and effective:

- **Effective:** Storytelling effects changes in the world around us. As storytellers we are called to reflect upon how our stories lead others and engage them to make history in ways that uphold the central transforming vision and story of Jesus Christ.

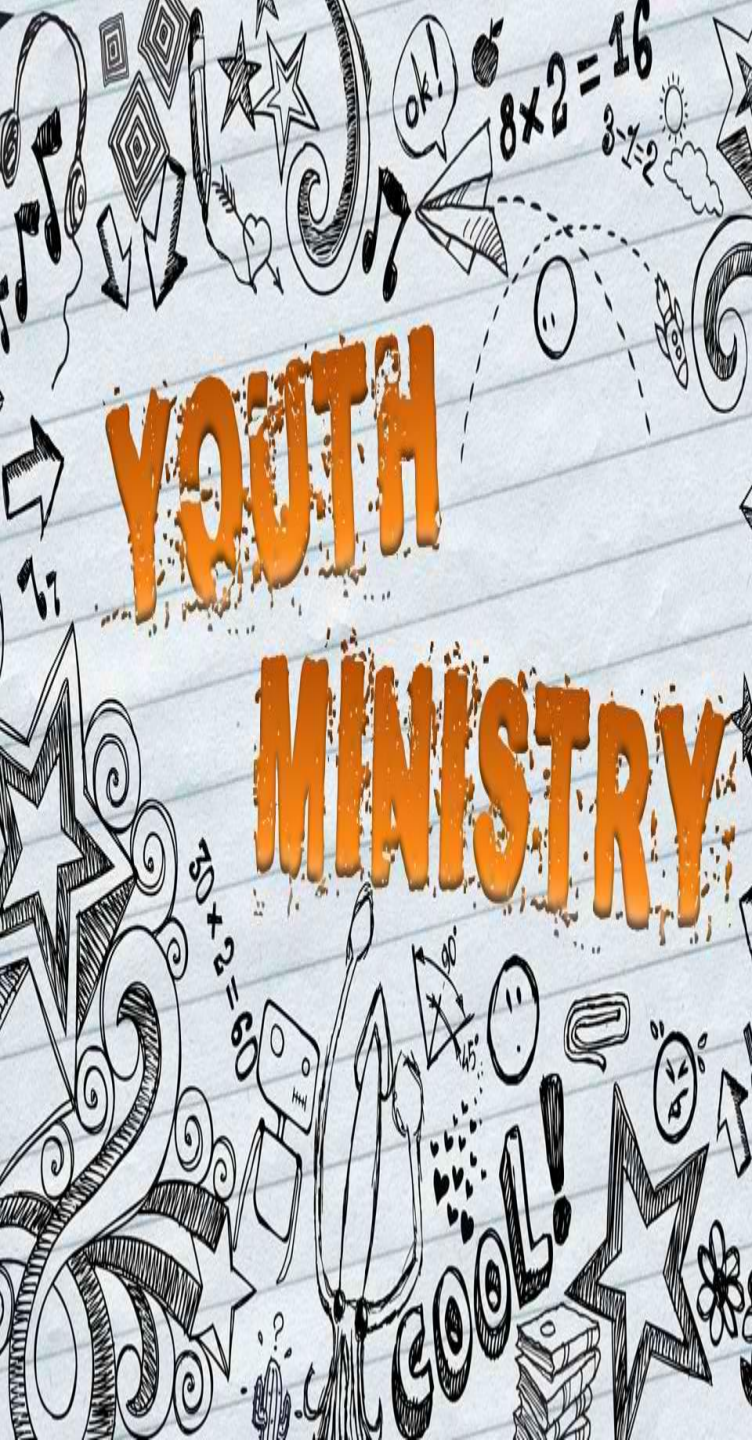




Third Order of the Day: Ministering

2. The power of story- telling in the religious education ministry

Telling stories corresponds to what Pope Francis calls In *Evangelii Gaudium*, sharing one's testimony if the door of opportunity opens.



Third Order of the Day: Ministering

3. Dialogue before debate

We must engage the culture not just with good arguments, but with an appeal to the human heart.

This means focusing on a person's intrinsic desire for purpose—a heart issue more than a head issue, (Nelson, 2015).

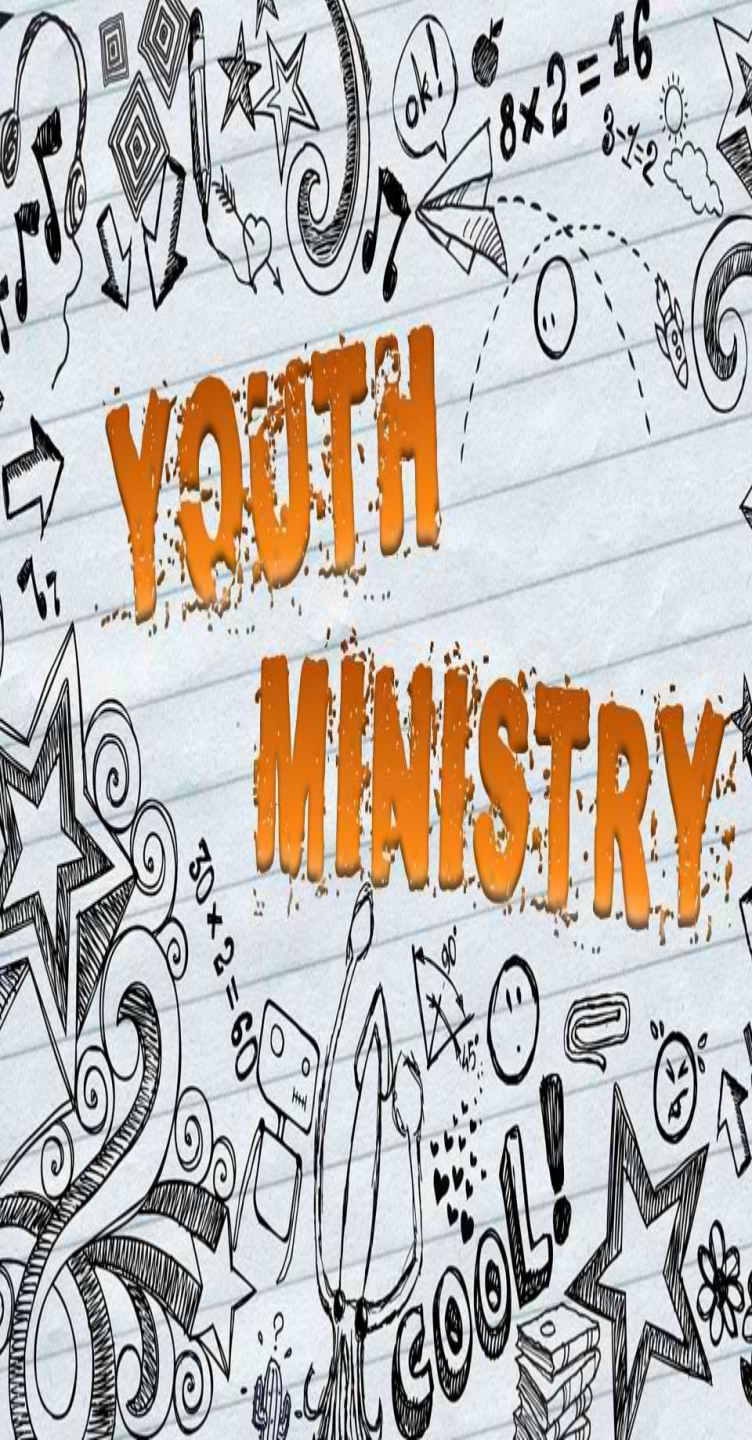
Third Order of the Day: Ministering

3. Dialogue before debate

Dialogue is much more than the communication of a truth. It enriches those who express their love for one another through the medium of words.

A preaching which would be purely moralistic or doctrinaire, or one which turns into a lecture on biblical exegesis, detracts from this heart-to-heart communication(EG, 142).





Third Order of the Day: Ministering

4. Accompaniment, not judgment

Religious education is an art, the art of accompanying Christians while remaining open to the mysterious newness of God's divine presence in history (Ospino, 2009).

Third Order of the Day: Ministering

4. Accompaniment, not judgment

To accompany others in religious education is a spiritual journey that builds on the relational character of our experience. On this journey Christian believers discover that God is the ultimate truth and the greatest good toward which we move –and religious educators the companions par excellence (Ospino, 2009).



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