



Story of Adolescence

Dawn Rundman, sparkhouse/Augsburg Fortress

PRE-LESSON INFORMATION

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Who are young people today and what in our cultural narrative impacts how youth hear, interpret, and live out God's story? Learn about the gifts, energy, and passions youth have for their life of discipleship and how adults can effectively guide and direct their gifts and passions as they live out (and into) their unique stories.

ELCA FAITH PRACTICE

Encourage

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Report on general demographic data about youth.

- Identify effective tools for learning more about youth-related issues.

- Describe the range of faith formation environments their youth experienced as children.

- Practice giving the Faith Formation Interview and identify how to adapt it for their context.

- Consider how they view the story of Samuel's call after exploring a small part of the Story of Adolescence.

BIBLICAL FOCUS

Luke 2:41-52 – Young Jesus in the temple

1 Samuel 3 – Young Samuel is called

MATERIALS NEEDED

Computer, projector, and screen for PowerPoint that accompanies this session

Ability to access and project video/sound that accompanies this session (if utilized). It is highly recommended that you download online videos prior to the presentation.

Bibles

Laptop, tablet, or smartphone with Internet access

Pens or pencils

Handout One: 4C Census Sheet (see Appendix; one copy per person)

Handout Two: Deep Dive (see Appendix; one copy per person)

Handout Three: Faith Formation Interview (see Appendix; one copy per person)

LESSON PLAN

PART ONE: Census Data: Not Just for Quirinius Anymore

Welcome participants to the Practice Discipleship session titled “The Story of Adolescence.” This session will focus on young people we serve in our ministry who are between the ages of 11 or 12 through 18 or 19.

Begin your time together reading Luke 2:41-52, the only story we have about Jesus as an adolescent. Consider these questions together:

What do you think were some different ways that the teachers responded to Jesus’ presence?

Where does Jesus’ divine self come through in this story? Where does his human self show?

How do you think your response to this story would be different if Jesus were significantly younger or older than age 13?

Now look at some basic demographics about youth today. Our ministry can benefit when we take a closer look at the four Cs of demographics: our country, our church, our communities, and our congregations? Use the 4C Census Sheet to take notes, and look up statistics on your Internet-capable devices.

Country: In the United States today, youth aged 10-19 make up about 13.5% of the population. That’s about 1 in 8 Americans. As a youth ministry volunteer or professional, you are developing proficiencies that serve and support 1 in every 8 people.

(Source: You can view the 2012 Census Statistics Table 1 of [this site](#).¹)

Church: Data was last collected on age of ELCA members in October 2008. Results show that just over 4% of members are between the ages of 15-19. No data were reported for the age 10-14 demographic. Assuming that the number is about the same, about 4%, that’s about 1 in 12 ELCA members, which shows that our numbers as a church body do not match the US data.

(Source: You can view these 2008 findings from the ELCA Office of Research and Evaluation [here](#).²)

Community: Practice locating census information about children and youth in participants’ own communities using the search tools on the U.S. Census Bureau site. Link your smartphone, tablet, or laptop up to [this site](#).³ Choose a state and then a city to view demographics. (To demonstrate, you can look up information on the birthplace of ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton – Cleveland, Ohio.)

¹ <http://www.census.gov/population/age/data/2012comp.html>

² http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCA_Attendee_Age.pdf

³ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

1. Choose a state from the map.
2. Go to the cities area and choose the city you'd like to view.
3. View demographic information and learn more about your community, including the number of people under the age of 18, ethnic and racial backgrounds, household income levels, and more.

(Source: Link up to [this site](#)⁴ your smartphone, tablet, or laptop.)

Congregation: You may have your congregation statistics memorized, or maybe there's a copy of the annual report easily accessible. If not, enter your zip code into the ELCA search tool [here](#)⁵ and then look up some basic stats on your congregation.

Why look at demographics? Sometimes we may want to take the big picture view of what it's like to be an adolescent in 21st Century America. But other times it's more helpful to keep specifics of your own community in mind. Going back and forth between viewing the big picture and the drilling down into your specific context ensures that you are tuned into the wide range of influences on the youth you serve.

Now that you've looked at some statistics in the country, our churchwide body, your community, and your congregation, here are some questions to consider:

Which data points are most surprising, revealing, or compelling to you?

Describe 2-3 demographic features of youth in your *own* context that give insight about your own work.

What do we know about the country, church, community, and congregation of young Jesus?

Takeaway: In our own congregations, we are affected by many layers of context.

PART TWO: The Story of *Your* Youth

This segment utilizes the video that accompanies the session. A script with the video's content is provided in the appendix for leader use in preparing the lesson and for those who do not have access to or do not wish to utilize the video during the session.

It may seem theoretical to consider factors, trends, and the 41 million youth in the United States right now, or the 1 in 12 ELCA members who are youth. It is much more practical to consider what is happening in the lives of youth in your context.

⁴ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

⁵ <http://search.elca.org/Pages/WorldMap.aspx>

Play the video that accompanies this session to learn keep more about some specific trends, patterns, related to mental illness, gender-specific trends, and technology. Note that the video also has a goal of training participants to learn more about these and other related topics from reputable sources. As participants watch the video, ask them to keep these questions in mind:

Which of these issues was most relevant for you in your ministry right now? If you can withhold identifying information to maintain confidentiality, share some details about why you're connecting with this issue.

Which topic would you like to learn more about?

Who are three people you know you can contact when you need more help, support, or information about one of these topics?

Once the video is over, ask participants to complete the Deep Dive handout that helps them identify topics for further study.

Takeaway: The story of adolescence can be complex. Sometimes we need to look to fields of science, medicine, and psychology for insight, help, and support.

PART THREE: We Once Spoke/Thought/Reasoned Like Children—Now What?

Your group has learned more about the story of adolescence by exploring demographics and drilling down to some specific topics. For the final part of this session, look at the story of adolescence in a different way by considering their **childhood experiences** before they enter this time of transition and growth.

The PowerPoint slides show a few different types of youth and their familiarity with the Bible.

- Some youth are novices and new to Bible stories.
- Some youth have developed a view of the Bible as a rulebook that supports a moral framework for living life.
- Some youth had a lively time with Bible stories that came to life in multisensory ways.

Continue the conversation by thinking about Bible stories your youth heard when they were children, who told them these stories, and what they learned. Talk about these questions:

This slide shows three examples. What other types of childhood experiences with the Bible might youth in your congregation have before their time with you?

In three words, describe the children's ministry in your congregation.

Report on the general level of biblical literacy that youth have as they begin confirmation.

No matter what kinds of experiences youth had with the Bible as children, the way they think about, process, and interpret these stories will change during adolescence. They need to do more than identify main characters, settings, and plot points.

Growing in faith doesn't just depend on analyzing Bible stories in more depth. The concept of story can extend further to mean ...

- Stories from the Bible
- Stories of faithful Christians throughout time
- Stories about the Christian church in action
- Stories about the ministries of your congregation

Think back to the lament about biblical literacy that some pastors share when youth begin confirmation. What kind of literacy do youth show when the concept of story is expanded to include these concepts?

Instead of wondering about these literacy levels in youth we serve, we can deliberately learn about childhood experiences that have shaped their faith. To learn more about their backgrounds and beliefs, participants can review the Faith Formation Interview form and practice by giving it to a partner. After completing it in pairs or trios, walk through these questions.

- How do you think your youth would respond if you asked them these questions?
- What questions are missing on this form? Which questions would you drop?
- What do you think you could learn from your youth from interviewing them?

Takeaway: Youth are developing cognitively, emotionally, and socially in ways that lead them to experience Bible stories in different, more complex ways—and to articulate what has shaped their faith so far.

PART FOUR: Closing Time

To close your time together, read the story of Samuel's call from 1 Samuel 3. God knew Samuel had been faithful his whole young life. Samuel's message to Eli may not have been as effective if he delivered it as a child. God may have called Samuel at this age because Samuel was capable of more abstract thought, more complex language, and more advanced reasoning.

Explore these questions together:

- Scholars estimate that God called Samuel when he was about 12, an age when he had newly emerging cognitive capabilities. What amazing things have you seen 12-year-olds do?
- Many times when we read this story, we stop before the verses about Samuel delivering a prophetic and difficult message to Eli. Have you ever witnessed youth delivering a prophetic and difficult message? What was that like?
- Are there things you believe youth are uniquely able to do in the life of your congregation that they could not do as children—or as adults? How can you make room for them to do these things?

CLOSING THE CONVERSATION

Thank the group for their participation and make any final remarks or announcements. Then offer this closing prayer (or one of your own):

God of all ages and of all the ages, you have created us with brains and bodies that change so much in the first years of life. Help us to know those we serve and to learn more about them. Thank you for those who have taught youth your story during their childhood years. Guide us to know how to be open to the unique gifts they can offer. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The following are suggested as resources for further exploration of this session's topic.

To learn more about scientific findings on healthy outcomes in children and youth, check out Mind Positive Parenting's site at www.drdavewalsh.com and the [Developmental Assets Profile \[www.search-institute.org/surveys/DAP\]](http://www.search-institute.org/surveys/DAP) offered by the Search Institute.

The National Association of School Psychologists [www.nasponline.org/resources] provides several reports available to these school professionals, but some are available to everyone on topics like [gambling](#), [school crisis management](#), [cyberbullying](#), [ADHD classroom interventions](#), and [self-injury](#).

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore gave a terrific [TED talk](#) on adolescent brain development. [www.ted.com/talks and search for "Sarah-Jayne Blakemore"]

Jay Giedd hosted the PBS Frontline program [Inside the Teenage Brain](#). [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/interviews/giedd.html] This 60-minute program is viewable online or available for purchase.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Dawn Rundman is Director of Children's Ministry at sparkhouse, the ecumenical division of Augsburg Fortress. She has studied child and youth development for two decades and seeks to support the church in applying best practices to ministry for children, youth, and families. Dawn lives in the Twin Cities with her husband Jonathan and their two children.



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Video Script – Story of Adolescence

The following script is, generally speaking, the content contained in the video segment of this lesson, provided as information for those who cannot access or do not wish to utilize the video.

[Scripted Video begins.]

[Caption: Dawn Rundman, Ph.D.]

Hi there. Thanks for tuning into this video about The Story of Adolescence. My name is Dawn Rundman. Thanks for engaging in this session on The Story of Adolescence! I'm a lifelong Lutheran and I hold a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology. I love Jesus, I love psychology, and I love that our church embraces the intersections between faith formation and science. As you deepen your understanding of the story of adolescence, I hope you'll see how an understanding of scientific research and sources can be used to expand your own ministry toolkit.

In this 15-minute video, I'll briefly cover four topics to give you a quick look into why they are important for youth ministry professionals. You'll also learn where to go for more insight and information. Additionally, I'll suggest a few ways that serving in a ministry position presents some challenges and opportunities when it comes to addressing these issues in your work with youth.

So let's get started.

[Caption: Mental Illness, Mental Health]

Adolescent mental health is a topic worth investigating for anyone who works with youth. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that **4 million young people** in the US between the ages of 9 and 17 have a serious mental disorder that affects daily life functioning.

While there are several types of mental health disorders that occur in youth, the most common ones include **depression, anxiety, substance abuse disorder, and eating disorders**.

Several federal agencies provide helpful resources to identify causes, symptoms, treatment options, and other helpful information of these disorders.

The US Department for Health and Human Services [show web site www.hhs.gov] provides in-depth information on mental health issues by state.

The National Institute of Mental Health [show web site www.nimh.nih.gov] has downloadable fact sheets on these topics.

And the National Adolescent and Youth Adult Health Information Center [show web site nahic.ucsf.edu] bills itself as your one-stop shop for adolescent and young adult health statistics and information.

In short, there is no shortage of information available to you to learn more about these mental health issues in the youth you serve. But let's go beyond the stats. **What does this mean for you as a youth ministry professional?**

You may know of some youth who have already been diagnosed. Maybe you are thinking of a particular youth right now. But it's actually more likely that you will be involved in the lives of youth and their families as they *begin* their journey with the assessment and treatment of mental illness. This is because the onset of adolescence can coincide with the onset of mental health problems. One extensive study of over 9000 people found that half of all lifetime diagnosable mental health disorders start by age 14.

Youth ministry professionals can play an important role on the team involved in assessing, diagnosing, and treating mental health issues in youth. You may be a source of information for mental health professionals who conduct assessments and create treatment plans. You can also support youth and their families, through prayer, conversation, and encouragement. Whatever role you play, you can commit to learning more *and* to seeing youth for the unique children of God they are, not just statistics and profiles.

These mental illness statistics can seem overwhelming, so let's not forget that researchers are looking more closely at factors linked to healthy mental development in youth as well. In fact, a field called positive psychology has received increased attention, especially due to the work of a psychologist named Martin Seligman. His work, and the work of others who study positive psychology, have emphasized the importance of studying the attributes and characteristics linked to healthy development.

We can gain additional insight into positive mental health and best practices in achieving them by looking at the work of the Search Institute. This organization has conducted extensive research to identify developmental assets in youth that are linked to healthy outcomes. Not surprisingly, many of these assets are supported by the work we do in congregations.

Secrecy and shame have long surrounded mental illness. As people of faith we are called to pray for and reach out to those who are most vulnerable. As youth ministry professionals, you can provide a unique and important context that supports mental health for youth and that rejects the stigmas associated with mental illness.

The next few topics are gender specific. While they don't apply to every girl or guy in your youth group, knowing about these topics can definitely help you recognize when they do arise as issues in the youth you serve.

[Caption: Early-onset Puberty in Girls]

One gender-related issue is the more recent phenomenon of girls who undergo the changes of puberty much earlier than in the past, sometimes starting at age 6 or 7.

Let's clarify a few definitions here first. **Puberty** is a developmental period of time defined by the physical changes of adolescence, including some changes that are more visible and others that are more private. **Adolescence** is a broader term describing a time period that encompasses this physical growth but includes many cognitive, social, and emotional changes as well. Puberty spans a few years, but adolescence span the time of puberty's onset until the onset of adulthood.

Parents, physicians, school health workers, and others working closely with children in elementary school have been documenting signs of early onset puberty over the last few decades. Intense dialogue on this topic began after the publication of a 1997 study of over 17,000 girls. An authoritative study of over 1200 girls was published several years later in a 2010 issue of the medical journal Pediatrics. A number of causes have been proposed for early onset puberty, including increased occurrence of obesity, exposure to environmental chemicals, and changing family structures that have led to more girls growing up in households without their biological fathers present.

Even if researchers are getting closer to understanding the causes of these changes, our work in ministry is focused more on supporting these girls and their families. The early onset of puberty in girls is often reported with a degree of anxiety and even alarm—most parents are not used to the thought of their second or third grade daughter needing a bra or getting her period.

What does this mean for you as a youth ministry professional? Here are four things to remember:

Be aware of changes: The girls in your group who undergo earlier onset of puberty may become more self-conscious about their changing bodies because they don't see other girls around them going through the same transition.

Listen to caregivers: Parents may come to you for information, support, or ideas. Be prepared to hear them and understand the kind of help they'd like from you. Many parents look to their church as a source of help and support in teaching their kids healthy understandings of human sexuality. This is a great opportunity to do so.

Adjust your expectations: Appearances can be deceiving. Puberty may signal the start of adolescence, but sometimes the other changes lag behind. A girl may look 4 or 5 years older than her actual age, but she may not have the cognitive or socioemotional maturity to match. Make sure your expectations match what you know a student can do rather than assuming they are as mature as they appear.

Provide a safe, accepting place: You can continue to provide youth with a place where they can feel safe, where they can question, and where they can make great connections with you, with each other, and with their faith. Girls undergoing early puberty may need this safety and acceptance during this critical time of change they undergo before their same-age peers.

Maybe you can already think of a girl or two in your group who fits this category. Maybe you haven't experienced this yet. Be prepared with how you'll welcome and support these girls—

and make sure that others in the group help contribute to a safe and accepting environment too.

Another issue related to gender is what's been called "The Boy Crisis" because of several differences in outcomes between boys and girls. Here are a few key ones based on current research:

Boys are twice as likely as girls to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, four times as likely to commit suicide, five times as likely to be in juvenile detention, and five times as likely to die of homicide.

On the education front, boys in secondary school receive 70% of Ds and failing grades. Males drop out of high school at higher rates than females. In the area of college enrollment, the male to female ratio is now 2-to-3.

These studies demonstrate how these gender differences are widening instead of situations improving for both boys *and* girls. Potential causes for these discrepancies are extensive, such as expectations in schools, the increased prevalence of violence, society's expectations for boys and men. Googling the term "boy crisis" will lead to a range of statistics, perspectives, and proposed solutions.

What does this mean for you as a youth ministry professional? As a faith community, we can add another documented gender difference to the list: Several studies, including a 2010 Gallup Poll, find that women attend worship more often than men. What are we doing in our congregations that leads to boys in our midst to be less likely than their girl peers to grow up and worship with a church community? How could we develop youth ministries that appeal to the girls and boys in our churches, acknowledging their range of preferences, interests, and strengths? These kinds of questions may be helpful to review your current ministries, identify what activities and experiences that will connect with more with boys or with girls, and keep an eye out for gender stereotypes and biases.

One final note on this topic: The development of identity and spirituality in young men was the focus of the book *Coming of Age* authored by three men who are veterans in researching and writing about faith formation: Rollie Martinson, David Anderson, and Paul Hill. If you're interested in learning more about what the decade after youth ministry looks like for many youth men, this is a great resource.

The fourth and final issue in this video is a brief at one of the labels now given to youth—that of digital native. Whenever we're looking at research about digital technology, or how identity develops in a networked world, or challenges like cyberbullying, we have to keep in mind that the digital world change so quickly—new hardware, new programs, new apps, new breakthroughs, new trends. Any study that provides a read on youth and tech may seem outdated just a few years after the results are published. That's why it's especially important to locate trustworthy sources so you can keep current on trends in this fast-changing field. Here

are a few general findings that we know of when it comes to youth and digital media based on recent Pew Center data from 2012.

Youth are online. 95% of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 are online.

Youth have devices. About 80% of teens have a cell phone and a desktop or laptop computer.

Youth access social media. Over 80% of teens use some kind of social media.

And here are a few recommendations for sources of research about digital natives.

First, Common Sense Media is a great source for media recommendations and ratings of books, movies, and video games. They also conduct studies to track media trends in kids and youth. In 2012, they published a study titled *“Social Media, Social Life: How Teens View Their Digital Lives* that summarized results from over 1000 13- to 17-year-olds who were asked how social media affected their self-perceptions and relationships. The results are worth checking out.

Second, Dr. David Walsh’s site on Mind Positive Parenting contains valuable content on media, technology, and the family, including findings from brain research. Dr. Walsh also compiles research from a number of other reputable sources such as the Pew Foundation and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

And third, you have the youth in your midst who are able to give you a close-up look at how they are using technology. Take a look at a few of the national surveys and adapt some of the questions for your own context. What would an annual Youth Group Technology and Media Survey look like in your congregation?

What does this mean for you as a youth ministry professional?

Review your policies: You may already have practices in place, such as communication methods, policies for posting images on social media, and asking kids to turn off their devices during your time together. Clarify your expectations for appropriate use of media...and recognize that these expectations may change over time. For example, many congregations who would have once frowned upon cell phone use during worship now encourage their community to use their devices to live tweet, post photos, answer questions, and more during this time.

Embrace your role of both/and: You can both develop fluency with technology and media *and* provide many opportunities for youth to have face-to-face experiences with each other that go deep. Your role can be one to recognize how social media can help to maintain and strengthen relationships...*and* you can also give youth many opportunities to build relationships with you, each other, and their families. You can help youth establish a faith-based foundation for healthy social media boundaries, healthy relationships, and healthy stewarding of their time and talents. As the digital world continues to evolve in ways we can’t even predict, what a blessing that youth can rely on you to stay current and stay connected.

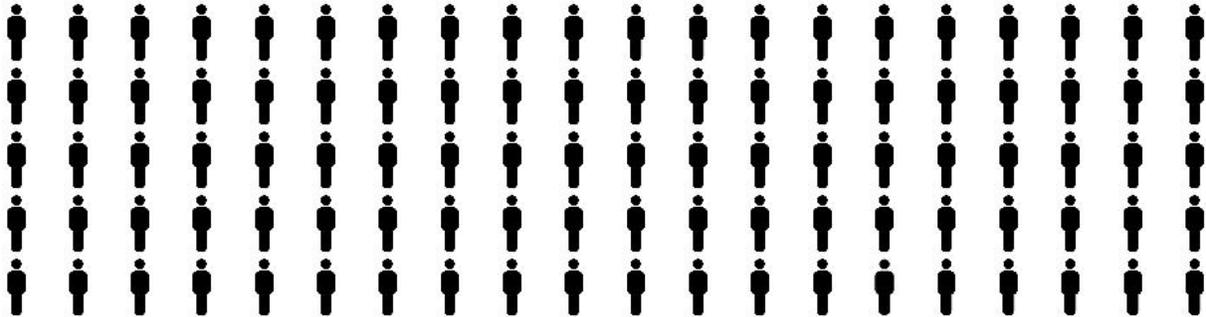
I hope that you've learned something during this video. And I hope that you've been inspired to learn more about one or more of these topics. You may wish to share with others about one of these issues affecting you right now. Maybe there's a topic you'd like to learn more about to help strengthen your ministry. And I hope you've been able to identify some people in your church community or another context who can help provide you with help, support, or information. May God bless you in your ministry as you experience the story of adolescence with the youth in your midst.

4C Census Sheet

C is for COUNTRY

10-14yo 20,605,000 (6.7% of US population) :: Circle them in green below.

15-19yo 21,239,000 (6.9% of US population) :: Circle them in orange below.



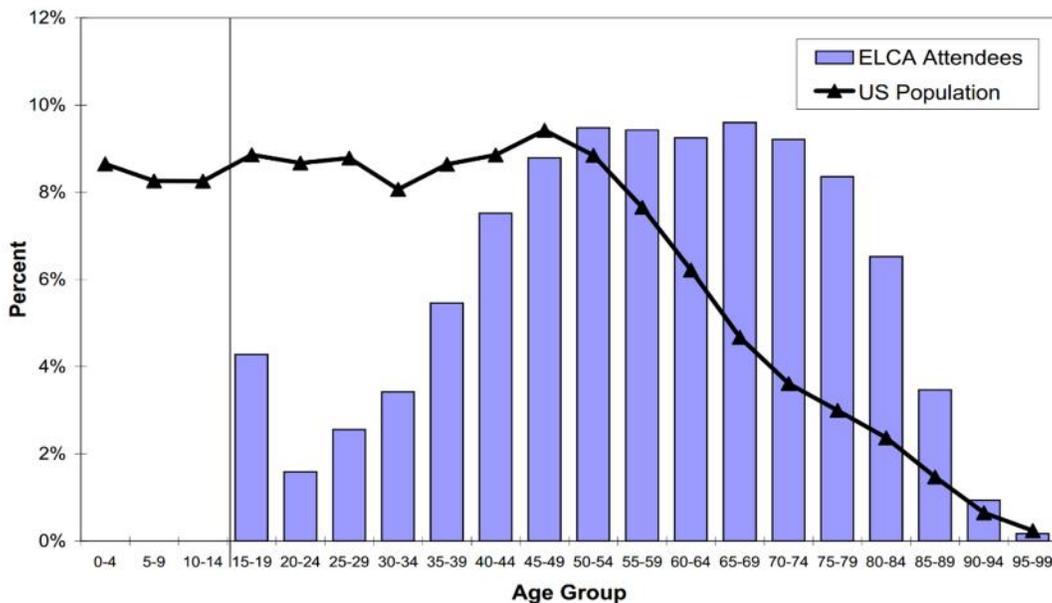
You can view the 2012 Census Statistics Table 1 of [this site](#).

Person icon by Jens Tärning.

This graph shows the percentage of ELCA members by age attending worship as compared to these age segments in the US population. The data were collected in 2008. No data were collected for ELCA attendees under the age of 15.

C is for CHURCH

Medians for people age 15 to 99 are 58 for ELCA attendees and 39 for US population.



C is for COMMUNITY

Find your town's population stats by going [here](#) and selecting a state and then a city. The screen captures below show what happens when searching for Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's hometown of Cleveland.

Fast, easy access to facts about people, business, and geography

To begin, select a state from this list or use the map to the right.

Alabama

[Student State Facts](#) - a site specifically for younger students.

You'll find statistics based on age of residents, racial and ethnic backgrounds, education, type of housing, household income, poverty levels, number of businesses, and more. Check out these stats for your community. Any surprises? How can this knowledge help your ministry with youth and their families?

State & County QuickFacts

Select a State USA QuickFacts What's New FAQ

Ohio counties- [selection map](#) Ohio cities- [place search](#) [More Ohio data sets](#) [Share this page](#)

Select a county Select a city

Cleveland (city), Ohio

Want more? [Browse data sets for Cleveland \(city\)](#)

People QuickFacts	Cleveland	Ohio
Population, 2013 estimate	390,113	11,570,808
Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base	396,697	11,536,503
Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013	-1.7%	0.3%
Population, 2010	396,815	11,536,504
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2010	7.1%	6.2%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2010	24.6%	23.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2010	12.0%	14.1%
Female persons, percent, 2010	52.0%	51.2%

What is an interesting finding about the range of ages in your community? Do the statistics about racial and ethnic diversity match your congregation? Your youth group? How do your congregation's ministries address the needs and opportunities reflected in these statistics?

C is for CONGREGATION

To get big-picture stats about your congregation, you can check your annual report or look up your church on the ELCA's congregation page [here](#).

How many baptized members?

How many confirmed members?

What are some notable demographic trends in your congregation over the last few years?

DEEP DIVE

Jot notes as you watch the video.

Circle the topic that is most relevant to your ministry right now.

Star the topic that you know the most about right now.

Place an X by the topic you'd like to learn more about.

Write the names of three people who can be resources to you for one or more of these topics.

Mental Illness, Mental Health

Early Onset Puberty

The Boy Crisis

Digital Natives

FAITH FORMATION INTERVIEW

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about the faith history of the youth in your congregation. Follow these tips to put youth at ease and get the conversation going.

- *Welcome the youth and let her/him know that you will keep their responses confidential.*
- *Provide comfy seating, offer water and/or healthy snacks, and have a few things in close range they can do with their hands, like a Koosh ball, kinetic sand, or Legos.*
- *Not all youth may have joined the congregation, so make sure your language emphasizes that belonging to the community is more than showing up on the member register.*
- *Adjust language as needed to fit your context!*

Thanks for letting me interview you! I wanted to learn more about you and some of your experiences.

When did you become part of the church community here?

What made you/your family decide this was a good place for you?

What do you like best about this place?

Is there anything you *don't* like? Tell me about that.

Next I want to ask you some questions about when you were younger.

What do you know about your baptism?

Why do you think you were baptized?

When you were a little kid, what were some of the faith questions you remember about things like God, the Bible, Jesus, miracles, and the Holy Spirit?

What were some ways you learned about God when you were a little kid?

If youth attended Sunday school: Tell me some things you remember about Sunday school. How did going to Sunday school help to shape and grow your faith?

Now that you're older, I want to learn what has stayed the same and what is different from when you were a kid.

Imagine you walk by a Sunday school classroom with young children. What is the difference between what they are doing and what you think we'll be doing together in our youth group?

What are some Bible stories you know? Which story is a favorite of yours, and why?

What questions about faith do you have now that you didn't have as a little kid?

What do you want to learn and experience in the next few years before you have the opportunity to affirm your baptism at confirmation?

What do you think will be part of your faith as a kid, a youth, and a grown-up?

Thanks for sharing with me about your faith experiences! Is there anything else you wanted to say?