

## What is a Young Adult?

Young adults are defined as people between 18 and 35 years of age. This group includes people who are

- College students at any institution of higher education
- Seeking full time employment
- Working full time
- Married
- Not married yet
- Parents
- Single parents
- Divorced
- Widow/widowers

### Characteristic of Young Adults:

We divided young adults into four groups:

1. 18-23 years of age—college/career
2. 24-35 years of age—single
3. 24-35 years of age—married without children
4. 24-35 years of age—married with children

### Characteristics of 18-23 years of age:

1. Trial and error
2. Short attention span (easily accessible)
3. Impatient
4. Independent
5. Beginning/training for jobs or careers
6. No kids
7. Low income
8. Lots of roommates or living with parents
9. Lots of free time for social needs or service
10. Lots of work—college classes, jobs (more than one part-time or long hours at a full-time job) overwhelmed with responsibilities
11. Some will experience unplanned pregnancies that lead to child support and child care issues
12. Want authenticity from those in leadership positions
13. Gothic influence
14. Exploratory—Spiritual, identity, relationship
15. Want to be loved
16. Identity development—in relationship to something of value
17. Relationship development—friends and marriage. Interested in pre-engagement and marriage counseling.
18. Scared of Commitment—some seeking for love that leads to early marriages
19. Need for community to be connected and included
20. Want to be trained to share their faith
21. Intimacy development

22. Exploring career and stability opportunities
23. Sexual Issues

**Characteristics of 24-35—not married yet.**

1. Establishing a career has high priority
2. Face the possibilities of multi-careers
3. Some are nomadic
4. Some are seen as non-connected and independent.
5. May not see a need to “settle down” but some will want to settle down.
6. Some have immaturity issues
7. Some experience roommate and/or housing issues. Coping with living on one income that for some is quite low.
8. Some will know what they want and are focused and stable.
9. May be viewed as selfish since they are responsible for and only accountable to themselves. This is not a negative.
10. Tend to be mobile. This affects church and work. Young Adult Ministries needs to use this mobility for mission trips—both at home and abroad.
11. Some will be making decisions about marriage. Use this time to prepare them to be good marriage partners.
12. Some will be regularly inconsistent but they may not see this as being inconsistent.
13. Seek the best options and evaluate all options available to them.
14. Remember it takes time (two years) to make commitments and to trust the quality of fellowship that connects people.
15. They want to see authenticity in leadership.
16. Help them to learn through the difficult times and issues.
17. Teach an acceptance of singleness that enables them to live as successful people for as long as their season of singleness lasts.
18. Remember to use a both/and focus. That is there is a need for time to focus on single adult issues and time to be together with all adults.
19. Encourage and applaud their abstinence in a society that doesn't value sexual purity.
20. Some feel they hold responsible jobs but the church doesn't value them in the same way.
21. Help them to develop Christian values.
22. Help them to understand and find intimacy outside of marriage.

**Characteristics of 24-35 age group married without children:**

1. Many face financial issues as they have college loans, credit debt, and housing needs.
2. Newly married couples need to learn how to share money, communicate with their spouses, and how to share life with another person.
3. Help them establish their belief systems before children are born.
4. Some have identity issues—what does “grow up and settle down” mean?
5. Help them to discover how to fit into church and ministry as a couple.
6. Trying to find a balance between the romantic ideas of marriage and the realities of life.

7. At the upper end of the age group some will begin to feel pressure to have children.
8. Help to discover what it means to be married and to be intimate—understand that intimacy is more than a euphemism for sexual intercourse.
9. Adjustments in friendships and relationships with single friends after they are married.
10. New Christians may bring to the marriage “relational baggage” and need to be taught Christian principles.
11. Teach communications principles and skills
12. Teach conflict resolution skills
13. Develop a commitment to marriage. Those new to the church may have a different view of marriage commitment than others who “grew up” in the church. Family backgrounds also influence this commitment.
14. Help the couples to learn marriage principles and to grow as Christians.
15. Teach problem solving skills in pre-engagement and pre-marriage counseling. After marriage teach them to grow together as Christians and to minister together.
16. Teach them how to serve their communities and the Body of Christ.
17. Help them as they face sexual issues.
18. Help them to avoid “living up to the image” mentality—that is having the same standard of living as their parents.
19. Teach them how to deal with in-laws and extended family issues.
20. Teach about divorce and remarriage. Be compassionate with those facing divorce and remarriage.
21. Some may come to church because it’s expected behavior.
22. Some will have emotional baggage—wondering if their parent’s failed marriage is a prediction for them.
23. Help them to move beyond marriage myths—such as they can change their spouse.
24. Remember this group are potential givers of time, money, energy, etc.
25. Help them with gender issues—understanding each other. Resources:  
*Why Men Don’t Iron* by Moir and *Why Men Hate Going to Church* by David Murrow

**Characteristics of 24-35 age group married or single with children:**

1. Some are stepfamilies and need help as they adjust to and work with the challenges this family structures presents.
2. Need help in rearing children with morals
3. Needs a church with quality ministry to children that has a spiritual component to its teaching—that is, helping children to developing and grow in their faith.
4. Parents selection of a church usually places high emphasis on programs and ministry for children
5. This group has a focus on children with the parents needing community, same gender friendships, and marriage enrichment
6. Need childcare so parents can connect with others. There needs to be security for children and kids that are happy when they leave. Happy kids equal happy parents.
7. Need for intergenerational lesson topics to serve as one means of family discussions on what was presented during church/Sunday School classes.

8. Need time to worship together as a family. This requires a tolerance by others for children.
9. Understand the time commitments of parents
10. Help parents to know what they believe and teach them how to pass those beliefs to their children. Both parents need to share the same beliefs.
11. Need for good parent modeling—many parents are trying to figure out what parenting is
12. Help develop churchmanship—teach the importance of loyalty, priority setting, etc.
13. There is an unspoken expectation of “super children”—those that excel at everything
14. Help parents with their parenting skills—need a unified parenting style. Some are overwhelmed with the options and mixed messages about proper parenting.
15. This group often feels hurried—rushed through life.
16. They are looking for answers.
17. Needs to be a focus on helping children to build and develop their relationship to Christ. They need to have examples from the members of the Body of Christ.
18. Parents need to develop a priority in relationships: First is relationship with Christ, second are the relationships with their spouses, and third their relationships with the children.
19. Mothers are seeking a balance between work and marriage. These women often experience guilt since they can't do everything.
20. Teach the need for Christian simplicity.
21. Recognize the safety issues for children in the nursery, at church activities, and in the homes of friends.
22. Remember “cocooning” happens—a retracting from society as the family is established.
23. Create safe ministry opportunities for family to be involved in as a group.
24. Give parents permission to care for their family.
25. Some will tend to idolize their children rather than God.
26. Questions parents have about teaching their children about sex.
27. Help parents to nurture their relationships with each other, find life satisfaction and maintaining sexual relationship while parenting.
28. Remember single parents will have the same issues but more intense since there is only one parent.
29. Some single parents will be looking for spouses.
30. Help parents deal with sibling relationships and rivalry.
31. Help parents to renegotiate relationships after children are born. This includes with spouse, church, etc.
32. Encourage parents to maintain their relationship with Christ and model it for others.
33. Remember children change relationships with parents and church.
34. Acknowledge shift in priorities and give permission to focus on children as needed.