

Challenging Culture

1. Worldview governs the other four elements. In many ways becoming a Christian involves a change in worldview. In order to be effective in evangelizing and discipling young people we need to address the issue of their worldview. With this in mind consider the following:

Getting young people to adopt the symbols of faith (WWJD bracelets, crosses, a youth Bible, Christian music), is ultimately counterproductive because the emphasis on symbols fails to address the root issue of worldview.

Teaching young people the difference between right and wrong behaviour is likely to turn them into “little Pharisees” whose focus is on outward behaviour and not on the heart.

2. With the previous discussion in mind, how do you think you set about changing a person’s worldview?
3. What do you think is the greatest change in worldview needed amongst the young people in our youth ministry in order to make them more enthusiastic about their faith?



Session 1:

Understanding Culture

Thinking About Youth Culture

1. Discuss the following statement. How true is it for you? In what way?

Youth ministry is cross cultural ministry.

2. UK musician Brian Eno said, “Culture is all human behaviour, outside of pure instinct. Everything we do is cultural: gardening, cooking, different fashions, architecture.” What are some other things that we could add to the list?
3. What are some ways in which being a teenager is different today from when you were growing up? Use the list above to help you identify some of the differences:

Defining Culture

Culture is made up of the following:

- i. **Symbols:** “*What is valuable*”
 - What do people spend their (discretionary) money on?
 - What do people prominently display in their homes?
 - What do people prize for the convenience and comfort they offer?
 - What are the symbols of status?
- ii. **Behaviour:** “*What is acceptable*”
 - What is considered illegal?
 - What is considered normal and what causes embarrassment or condemnation?
 - What ways of speaking are considered acceptable?
 - What is considered popular?
 - How do people relate to the opposite sex?
- iii. **Values:** “*What is important*”
 - How do people spend their (discretionary) time?
 - What value do people place upon human life and dignity?
 - What is the role and significance of the family?
 - What is considered ethical in a given situation?
 - What is considered moral in a given situation?
- iv. **Beliefs:** “*What is true*”
 - What is considered to be “right”?
 - What is considered to be “wrong”?
 - What is the basis for determining standards of morality and ethics?
- v. **Worldview:** “*What is real?*”
 - What is the intrinsic value of mankind?
 - What is the meaning of life?
 - How is truth determined?
 - What is “real” and what is illusion?
 - Who or what is “God” (god)?

1. Look through some youth magazines. What answers are they giving or implying for each of the elements of culture?

Symbols:

Behaviour:

Values:

Beliefs:

Worldview:

2. How different is the culture of the young people you are working with from what appears in these magazines? Use the five elements to help you come up with some answers:

Symbols:

Behaviour:

Values:

Beliefs:

Worldview: