



# TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE

Transition Team Newsletter : Issue 9

October 16, 2016

## TRANSITION TEAM CONVERSATION WITH

On August 25th and September 12th, 2016, members of the Transition Team met with Trinity Teenagers to obtain their opinions and suggestions as to what is needed to connect with and inspire youth participation in Trinity church life.

Our first meeting was with teens who headed off to university or college in September. Our second meeting was with those who are still in middle or high school. In total we spent over three (3) hours in conversation.

We asked the kids to be really honest with us... that they won't hurt our feelings. We indicated that it was very important to hear from them directly. Throughout our conversations they repeatedly said that they didn't want anyone to think that they were be disrespectful. It took a lot of courage and a level of comfort for them to put themselves out there. We sincerely thank them for being honest, open and candid.

We know this report is lengthy, but we thought that you would want to see their responses and suggestions to each question.

This information is being shared with Trinity's Leadership Teams.

### 1. What did you like about your time growing up at Trinity?

- Children's Time during the service
- Christmas Pageant – kids interacting
- Timbits during Sunday School
- Children's Choir
- Youth Choir
- Confirmation – All the Activities - Glow in the Dark – Mini Putting- Visiting the Mosque
- Sheep Farm - Laser Tag
- Youth groups outside the church (small group activities).

### 2. What didn't you like about your time growing up at Trini-

ty?

- Hymns (too old) - Needs to be more upbeat music that kids like, happy, different vibe, fall asleep.
- **Suggestion: Singing with Actions. Use the hymns but It would be better with more upbeat music. Make the music livelier because it gives a different vibe**
- Sermons not relevant... a series on aging for example. Focus on the older generation,
- Sunday School was better when it was held downstairs - where a variety of activities can be conducted during the time... drama, tried to get into the gym (door

- locked), more focus on the bible (6-10), not arts and crafts as main focus, room for a variety of activities,
- Recognition that in a small Sunday school can't do much,
- Stopped the Timbits
- Sunday School was better when they did more things with us during Sunday School. Now when the Sunday School wants to go downstairs the door is locked.
- **Suggestions: Add drama, Crafts need to be more focused on the bible, Place children in appropriate age groups.**



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### 3. Once entering your teenage years, what were issues that affected your attendance (both inside and outside the church)?

- Sermons were boring and wasn't getting enough out of them
- The Sermon wasn't relevant to the teenager. When she did come the sermon was on aging, didn't fit her needs (Arlyce is more relevant- explains what she is talking about)
- Work and sports (competitive paint ball, girl's hockey)
- Volunteering and homework, not enough time to come to church
- Volunteering Big Brothers / Big Sisters
- Church not a priority, (doesn't speak to them / has to speak to them, draw their interest / curiosity)
- Community involvement, Scripture important (how to engage kids... memory games)

### 4. Why do you think participation in church life drops off once you become a teenager?

- Work
- Sports
- Participation at church does not energize you

### 5. If you could have changed things during this period of

### time, what would it have been?

- Getting the older congregation to know the kids – don't have a separate table for them downstairs during coffee time
- Include them in adult conversations, inclusiveness, older people get to know them
- More welcoming (a feeling of belonging)
- Music for kids
- Invite them to get them involved in community work of the church (Christmas bazaar & mom's and tots)
- Make them feel part of the congregation
- Consistency in youth activities,
- Have a place for them to participate in the service
- Post the sermon topic on face book in advance
- Bring teenagers into the choir more kids would come
- **RECOGNIZE THAT TRINITY IS TRADITIONAL BY NATURE**
- More interactive,
- Advertising;
- Anyone Welcome
- Have Events: Laser Tag, Swimming
- Be honest with them
- Create a Youth Group during Confirmation
- Have a choir for youth and chil-

dren

- Music
- Youth Minister who is energetic
- Youth Group – do activities outside the church- someone's home
- Encourage kids to take on a project
- Have a mission trip (pair up with another church)
- Have different speakers for youth
- Have students come back to speak to youth
- Community Outreach-get youth involved i.e. Relay team for older members a relay team for children/youth
- Sunday mornings not a good time- Sunday afternoon would be better
- Have a youth group not on Sunday Mornings
- Focus more on community involvement for youth.
- They have Men's Breakfast Club, UCW, but nothing for youth
- Focus on Jesus story – not necessarily Easter. "Jesus did this for us"
- Memory Verses- do this with kids
- Fun songs: not hymns when kids are in church



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## #5 continued

- We need more Cynthia's
- Ask the younger people to help
- Children's time – tell the kids the story
- Involve them with choir- youth choir
- Musical instruments during service
- Trinity is really traditional- SF's needs to be more relevant
- Hold a Pizza Party for Grade 9's
- Need consistency, Youth need to know there is something for them all the time
- Singing that is upbeat
- Testimonials
- Pick a theme and be more open (Big Brothers, Relay for Life, Pitch In) and get young people involved. Trinity used to have a team for Relay for Life and the kids used to help make the costumes
- Have a young person sitting on Council, or have forums to gather input from young people
- Let the youth plan the forums
- Tour the church – tower bells Youth Group has a bunch of banners in a tower, pull them out and look at them.
- Have monthly events – the Haunted House was great
- Movie night once a month
- Split the groups up so that you

have a toddler, school age, teens, youth groups

- Have students come back and talk about their experiences – Camp Lauren
- Daily Bread Books
- Offer Retreats- Camp Lauren
- There is nothing after confirmation
- Offer something on Saturdays 1.5 to 2 hours - games, chill (get to know people),
- Discussions about a topic
- Youth group once a week or once every two week that offers sports, variety of activities, food, discussion

## #6 As you move away to begin the phase of life what would or will attract you to attend church (any church)?

- Sense of community in the church
- Posts about what the service is about
- What type of activities they have
- Relevant sermons – getting closer to god
- Music – music that speaks to youth group not old hymns
- Youth groups

## #7 If you were in charge, what would you do to attract youth to Trinity?

- Use Facebook to post what the sermon will be about

- Advertise what types of activities they have available for youth
- Start a Facebook group for youth, from Confirmation classes - youth could message their friends and pose questions about faith
- Create a Youth Group during Confirmation
- Have a choir for youth and children
- Music
- Youth Minister who is energetic
- Youth Group – do activities outside the church- someone's home
- Encourage kids to take on a project
- Have a mission trip (pair up with another church)
- Have different speakers for youth
- Have students come back to speak to youth
- Community Outreach-get youth involved i.e. Relay team for older members a relay team for children/youth
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- Let the youth plan the forums
- Tour the church – tower bells, (Youth Group has a bunch of banners in a tower, pull them out and look at them).
- Have monthly events – the Haunted House was great
- Movie night once a month
- Split the groups up so that you have a toddler, school age, teens, youth groups
- Have students come back and talk about their experiences – Camp Lauren
- Daily Bread Books
- Offer something on Saturdays 1.5 to 2 hours - games, chill (get to know people)
- Discussions about a topic
- Youth group once a week or once every two week that offers sports, variety of activities, food, discussion
- Music speaks to youth group
- Advertising – anyone welcome,
- Going somewhere
- Music, (Swaziland example; music, music, music)
- Sermon relevant to everyday life,
- Know the bible
- Support system church not just for the elderly
- Mission trips
- Pair up with other church youth groups
- Youth minister, energetic, enthusiastic
- Share stories @ Sunday school,
- Personnel testimonies,
- Church camps
- There is nothing after confirmation
- Something regular to keep them connected
- Discussion groups
- Sports
- Movie night
- Food, (Dryden 1st United) Interest depends on the church,
- Maundy Thursday type of experiences

Do you see  
any  
recurring  
themes?





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## THE CONVERSATION WITH TRINITY YOUTH (Ages 12 to 17)

### #1 What do you think about your time growing up at Trinity... likes and dislikes?

#### LIKES:

- Family and people... family important
- People care about them, church family
- Sunday School – when they came back to tell the congregation what they learned
- When they were able to show off their crafts
- Bringing down the offering from Sunday School
- Christmas Eve used to be the highlight of their attendance (vibe is important)
- Wreath coming down from the ceiling during advent – singing the Mountain song
- Kids can go to colouring area at the start of the service
- Church out at the farm
- Family and people very important
- Being asked to help
- Feel part of the service
- Christmas eve service – vibe – march in of the choir in gowns
- Related to Peter and felt he related to them
- The power of the anthems

#### DISLIKES

- Songs – not enough vibe – the vibe in not powerful - Can't pronounce the words or get the beat... attendance has a lot to do with music
- Not enough youth coming to church
- Can't relate the bible/message to everyday life
- Music
- Church has changed a lot
- Peter gone its different... it is a little bit disappointing
- Older generation not singing... mumbling... heads down... looking at words
- (Personal reflection) I don't know half the words in the old hymns... hold no meaning for me
- Same old services ... boring... same routine... pray... sings old hymns... pray.... sermon (usually not relevant to kids... doesn't relate to day to day life and how to apply the word of God... values ... no energy
- Not getting anything out of the sermons ... didn't get the connections...

#### WOULD LIKE

- Would like memory verses – they used to receive a chocolate bar if

they memorized the verse

- Youth playing instruments with the choir or John
- Youth to bring their own instruments
- Want to connect more with the music – more modern – the elder people in other churches are into the more modern music
- Big screen during service
- Want to see youth included in choice of song, allowed to participate with instruments
- A place on the bulletin to take notes from the sermon
- Reflection questions on scripture
- More education on the United Church of Canada
- If there is a bible reference state where, give some background, not everyone knows their bible
- New songs should be taught so folks get to learn them
- Like to be asked even if they can't participate
- Upbeat music
- Songs from More Voices— different instruments
- Learn more about God – bible versus
- Feel part of the service



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## WOULD LIKES

- Memorize verses get a rewards (a camp) thing
- Lots of sound... related to the music
- Churches (currently attending) happy, a lot more modern music
- Churches (currently attending) high energy... adults also... connected through music
- Feeling (personal reflection) no words describe how you feel through the music
- (Personal reflection) love Trinity my home church – vibe not as great here as at other churches because the music is engaging
- Youth have other music... instruments... draws participation... kids will gather and play music before service as other are arriving.
- Gets kids more involved
- Useful information to be used everyday
- More Voices... more upbeat easier to catch on (used at youth conferences)

## #2 What are the things that affect your involvement in church life?

- Lives are very busy – hockey gets in the way (school does not necessarily get in the way to attend church)
- If nothing is going on – they wouldn't necessarily come to

church at Trinity

- Focus on bible story – give a bible verse to study
- Encourage people to bring their own bible
- Wants to come to church – they crave god- but the sermons are hard to stay focused on
- Relate the bible to everyday things
- “I don't see what I can take out of the service, explain it more”
- “We are not getting out of these services, what we want to get out of them”
- Family schedules
- Outside activities—sports
- Sports, school, work,
- (personal reflection) being organized, fit it in.... time alone... devotions
- Prioritize what you do. Make time for church if it is relevant. Exciting, energizing
- Friends there
- Great atmosphere
- Kids delivering a kids message

## #3 What things would attract you to become more involved in church life?

- Want to teach Sunday School – be involved
- Work with Sunday School kids – teach a song to the kids, bring the kids down at the end of service and let kids sing the song they just learned.

- Don't really understand “united” teaching
- Youth Group – Rideau Christian Fellowship (RCF) is where we go
- For our church services, we need to get our signs out – get information out
- Camp- church environment to connect with friends – fall retreat – with people your own age, “Connected with God”, escape from reality
- Have time to be active—e.g. Skate Church. We have a gym—let's use it
- Let youth bring their musical instruments and have someone teach them a new hymn. The leader would be made aware of the instruments ahead of time so they can have the music for those instruments.—more than a jam session. Like the songs in More Voices.
- A safe place to be themselves to connect with God. Leaders there to help, but things would be self-directed. For example: different stations with words/sayings or things to reflect on. Resources available that reflect the United Church viewpoint.
- Religious home work
- Bible studies for kids
- Have own bibles, notes etc
- God talk. SFDCI... one day a week.



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### #3 continued

- Message for kids to keep them focussed
- Welcoming... hand shake... as service starts... Everyone becomes a greeter...
- Music speaks to you... powerful... feeling that God brings everyone together (Don't sit and listen)
- More participation

### #4 In your opinion, what is needed for youth ministry at Trinity?

- Suggested Music – New Boys, We Believe, Redeemed, How Great is Our God, Behold our Gold
- Offer songs with lots of movement
- We need kids to get more involved in church service
- Open to offering Sunday School
- What happened? These pews used to be full
- Pass the Peace
- Hard to pronounce the words in the songs offered, hard to get the beat
- More Voices – the songs are more upbeat, less stereotypical, easier to catch on to the song
- Have songs that we can relate to
- A youth leader who is dynamic with lots of energy who can relate to young people and their current

issues.

- Someone like a camp leader
- Be more involved in church service... each service... part of Sunday school
- Better connections... social media...youth face book page
- Retreats own age... connected...friends...same objectives...
- Music updated
- Engage kids through activity... Christmas bazaar... helping with reach out prayer shawl

What happened? The pews used to be full.

### # 5 If you were in charge of offering a youth programmes at Trinity what would you do?

- Print off posters and post in the high school and around town
- RCF – has a Facebook page – use group messages
- Communicate through email to parents
- Facebook page – use pictures, post bible verse
- (Personal reflection) “It feels so good to be asked, to be remembered to help” i.e. Christmas bazaar
- Games, Testimonial videos... bi-

ble study... Christian movies... snacks ...

- Connect through friends
- Movie nights
- Stuff for kids (family)
- It will take time to build... bring a friend
- Do things outside the church... farm visit... pool party...?
- Tapping into what kids like

### #6 How would you attract teenagers to a Trinity youth programme?

- Offer games
- Have families host events – get parents involved
- Fun activity – play a game
- Invite some people
- Don't give up if few show up – it takes time to grow
- Fisher, Carrie Underwood
- Really good movies – Do you believe?
- Tapping into what the kids are interested in
- Offer something- provide snacks
- Invite friends – plan for things to happen on a regular basis
- Offer something on a Friday night, Sat night from 7:30 – 9:30pm
- Invite the youth to participate in: prayer shawls, apple pie making, etc



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- Invite kids to come and sing with the choir
- Peter had energy...
- Campbell Woods & his music (growing up)
- New people (are identified and welcomed by the congregation ... birthdays & anniversaries are recognized)
- Advertising events more prominently
- Public notices kids activities at church
- Great facilities... gym, stage, hall, etc.



## Recurring Themes

- |                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| ◆ <b>Involve Youth</b>  | ◆ <b>Relevant Sermons</b>                 | ◆ <b>Trinity is “home church”</b>          |
| ◆ <b>Youth Ministry</b> | ◆ <b>Consistent programming for Youth</b> | ◆ <b>Use Social Media</b>                  |
| ◆ <b>Youth Minister</b> | ◆ <b>Sunday School Downstairs</b>         | ◆ <b>Allow time to grow youth ministry</b> |
| ◆ <b>Music</b>          |   | ◆ <b>Don't give up!</b>                    |