

Youth Pastor Questionnaire



PERSONAL

Please share your testimony and ministry call.

I grew up at Midland Evangelical Free Church. My parents brought me to Sunday school, but I never wanted to be there. In middle school I showed up to Wednesday night youth group because there was dodgeball, not because I wanted to grow in my faith. By the time high school rolled around, I cut away from the youth group altogether and only attended the main service because that made it easier to avoid building relationships or being asked tough questions. It wasn't until Covid, November of 2020, that I saw a pastor on a talk show that talked about the evidence of faith. I was convicted of the lack of fruit in my life and of the sins that clung so closely; namely pride, selfishness, idolatry and lust. I could not honestly say that I was a follower of Christ. God granted me repentance at that time and I decided to stop living for myself. I started reading God's word, praying like I wanted relationship with God, and taking church seriously. God transformed my desires and made detestable the things I previously sought after. He challenged me as I grew in faith by convicting me of sin and by providing opportunities to serve him. My desires were now for sexual purity, evangelism, understanding God's word, and everything else pertaining to godliness.

One of the first opportunities that God set before me was serving in Royal Family Kids Camp and Teen Reach Adventure Camp as a camp counselor. From there I got involved with the young adult ministry and youth ministry at Midland eFree. God stretched me as I was given teaching and leadership roles that helped uncover the gifting that God has graced me with. Through my experience as a layperson in various ministries, it became apparent to me that God was leading me to vocational ministry. I am an electrical engineer by trade, but my strongest desires are to teach God's word, to evangelize, and to disciple. Most days I am thinking about those things and wishing that I could be doing that as part of the workday. Mentors and friends have confirmed this gifting that God has given me for ministry. I am pursuing this opportunity in an effort to be faithful to God's calling on my life.

2. What does your daily spiritual practice look like?

Every morning before I roll out of bed, I pray with my wife. Most of my commutes to work are devoted to prayer and worship. The commute home is usually for listening to sermons or podcasts. I read my Bible daily; typically, in the evenings. My wife and I keep a prayer request board in our bedroom which we pray through as well. We discuss the things we are reading in God's word and share any particular convictions or

appreciations about the text. We enjoy scheming up ways to share the gospel and to disciple others who are involved with our lives. On a week-by-week basis I might give special attention to a person I am ministering to or a passage of scripture that I will be teaching on.

3. What hobbies and activities do you enjoy in your free time?

I enjoy reading and study, especially quiet evenings with my wife where we can discuss together. I like to bake. I like to walk. I really enjoy volleyball (I prefer beach volleyball but indoor is fun too). I also have a “technical-creative” side, so I enjoy doing the occasional house or car project. I also enjoy the shooting range.

4. What Pastors, Books, and/or People have influenced your life and ministry?

Pastors that have influenced me are Pastor Jeff Andridge, Pastor Gib Giblin, Pastor Kurt Gelman, Pastor John MacArthur, and Pastor Mike Winger. The first three listed are pastors that have directly pastored me at Midland Evangelical Free Church. Pastor Jeff set an example for me of a youth pastor who was heavily invested in his students (even when I tried my best to avoid him). Pastor Gib has led by example in deep, interpersonal ministry by helping me become more vulnerable, exemplifying earnest and spontaneous prayer, and showing great compassion for the flock. Pastor Kurt’s teachings and leadership have influenced me ever since he became the lead pastor. His encouragement and counsel ultimately led me to apply for this position. Pastor John MacArthur and Mike Winger are two online resources that I have learned from. They both set an example for me in careful exegesis of Scripture and a firm commitment to the truth.

Three books that have influenced me are The Gospel According to Jesus by John MacArthur, Every Young Man’s Battle by Stephen Arterburn, and A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible by Robert H. Stein.

Other people that have heavily influenced me are: Skye Adamcik – my wife who is strong in areas where I am weak and has a beautiful compassion for both those inside and outside the church. Lamar Richards – my closest friend and accountability. Dave Shumaker – a mentor who has taught me countless things about the Bible. Ray Comfort and Greg Stier - Evangelists that I greatly respect.

5. What would you attempt if you knew you wouldn’t fail?

I would attempt to learn multiple languages (including the biblical languages).

6. What are weaknesses and strengths you see in your life?

One weakness in my life is perfectionism. I often let perfect get in the way of good enough and cause myself and others frustration in the process. I can easily become fixated on little details that don’t really matter while missing the bigger picture. On the

other hand, a strength in my life is attention to detail. This has served me well in my engineering career and in my studies. This strength has especially helped me in my study of the Bible.

Another weakness is inflexibility. I am flexible, up to a point, but there is a line where I can become quite frustrated and defeated. I can have a difficult time adjusting when reality does not match up with my expectations.

A strength is intentionality. I strive to be conscientious in all that I do. I recognize that I am an ambassador for Christ, therefore I want to be careful in what I say and do so as not to bear his name in vain. I try to make the best use of my time with others and my time in solitude.

THEOLOGICAL

1. How would you summarize your theological view?

I am theologically conservative. I am a young earth creationist. I believe in the absolute sovereignty of God over all things and that nothing happens outside of his will. His Word is divinely inspired and all of it is profitable for the believer. Repentance and faith are both gifts from God, yet scripture maintains that there is still a personal responsibility to hold fast to the faith and walk in obedience. God is to be greatly feared and greatly loved. The hope of the believer is not in this life, but in the next.

2. Do you agree with the EFCA Statement of Faith? Please share any concerns with a specific point.

Yes, I agree. I am a member of an EFCA church.

3. What is the gospel? How would you explain it to a student?

God created us to be in relationship with him, yet we chose to rebel against his authority, creating a separation between us and him. God will pay us in death for our sins (for the wages of sin is death). The question is, where do you think you will end up when you die? Are you good enough to get into heaven? If you have lied, stolen, blasphemed God's name, dishonored your parents or looked with lust you will be judged guilty. Not only that, but God cares so much about righteousness that he will judge all of us not only based on our actions, but also on every careless word and evil thought. We are all horribly guilty before him and would be justly sentenced to eternity in hell. There is nothing we have to offer God and no amount of good that we could do to absolve us of our sins. The price for sin has to be paid. And God did just that when he sacrificed his Son Jesus on the cross. Jesus lived the perfect, sinless life we could not and then died a gruesome, agonizing death for our sins. More than that, he defeated death by being raised from the dead on the third day. That is God's great love for you on display; that while we were yet sinners – unlovable and rebellious – Christ died for us. If you repent of your sin, which means to turn from it, and put your wholehearted trust in Jesus and

what he did for you, then God will grant you eternal life as a free gift. He will cause his Holy Spirit to dwell within you to help you to desire righteousness. God demands that you surrender your life to him and simply trust in his sacrifice on your behalf. Now, what questions do you have? ...

4. What is your stance on marriage, homosexuality (LGBTQ+), and transgenderism?

According to the Bible, the only permissible sexual activity is in a covenant marriage between a man and a woman. Homosexuality is expressly forbidden in both the Old and New Testament. It should be treated the same as any other sexual sin. God created man in his image, both male and female. God assigns whether someone is male or female. Transgender ideology is an affront to God's design and does not help the individual who is struggling with the mental illness.

5. What are some theological issues that are important for Christian youth to get right in this time and place?

One theological issue that I have seen youths fail to grasp is regarding their witness to friends and classmates. There is a lack of gospel urgency, and sometimes, a focus on the wrong goal. For students who are timid, they may spend a lot of time building a relationship, but never get to sharing the gospel. For students who are bolder, I have seen it become about winning the argument instead of lovingly presenting the good news as a servant.

Another issue is holy living. There are too many students who think they can follow Jesus while still loving the world. I want students to see that walking in obedience to Christ is not burdensome, but rather joyful. Faith and obedience are an inseparable pair. Christians are to look different than the world. Students should stop striving to fit in with the darkness and instead choose to let their light shine.

Lastly, I think there is a tendency for youth (and whole denominations) to focus on experiences and feelings. Following Jesus is not a feeling. Church is not about entertainment. These things are fickle and can lead to a false sense of security about salvation. I want students' feelings to be informed by the truth. I desire that every one of them has a deep, abiding love for Christ and his Church. That love should be rooted in his Word, in prayer and worship.

MINISTRY

1. What aspect of ministry stirs your heart and passions?

What gets me excited about vocational ministry is having the opportunity to focus on ministry. Currently, all of the ministry work that I get to do is outside normal working hours, so I am very practically limited in how much I can do and when. I am passionate about leading others to Christ. After they have arrived at the foot of the cross, my

heart's desire is to see them become disciple-makers, to be bold in their faith and radical in obedience to Christ. Seeing others live for Christ further stirs up my affections for him and leads me to rejoice in the miraculous work he does within our sinful hearts. The pastoral care side of ministry excites me as well. People are often comfortable sharing difficult things with me, and I always feel honored when others choose to trust me in that way. In the same way I love to exhort, I also desire to be a comfort.

2. How have you developed and led volunteers?

All of my ministry experience has been as a volunteer. In that role I have gotten to lead by example for other volunteers and in some roles, I have gotten to take on more of a leadership role. For example, in the young adult ministry, those of us in leadership have prayed about and identified individuals in the group with gifting that would strengthen the leadership team. We brought on a social coordinator and another teacher and have given them the space to exercise their giftings.

For youth ministry, I went to a youth pastor conference down in Chicago in order to connect with Sonlife ministries. The end result of that was a 4-chair discipling training hosted at Midland eFree for all of us volunteers.

3. What does it look like for you to disciple someone?

I start by meeting him where he is. If he is not walking with the Lord, then it starts with the gospel. If there is an established faith, then I see it as my duty to pray for and with him and encourage him in the basic disciplines of the faith; i.e. Bible reading, prayer, fellowship with the church, sitting under teaching, etc. As he grows, I like to check in with him and see what questions he has and how I can help answer them. I will challenge him on certain things, especially in evangelism, and to be a resource and accountability partner for him.

4. What are some key trends in youth culture today, and how do you plan to engage them in ministry?

Social media presence is more extensive and time consuming than ever before. Unfortunately, many students' lives are device-centric. They are being heavily influenced by both the content they are consuming and the method by which that content is delivered. The result is a level of interconnectedness which is extreme in its scope, but shallow in depth. Students have also trained their brains to jump from dopamine hit to dopamine hit. They have difficulty focusing on anything for a significant period of time. Student's social media presence has allowed for misplaced affections, idolatrous and covetous sins. All this to say, the youth ministry has to meet students where they are. Culture shifts take time. The youth ministry should have an online presence that can be an oasis in the digital wasteland. From the teaching and discipling side of things, students need to be exhorted to spend their time on life-giving activities. Putting down the phone can be gamified too. Many students are relationally starved and

are using social media to fill that hole; so, the youth ministry ought to be providing the opportunities to cultivate deeper in-person relationships.

Another trend in youth culture is moral relativism. It's the "you do you" and "who am I to say their wrong" attitude. This is attractive to youth because it is seen as social awareness ("wokeness") and tolerance. This kind of ideology allows you to be an inoffensive "friend" of all and to never engage in conflict. This ideology, however, is contrary to the faith. In order to meet students in this mindset, the youth ministry ought to leverage the students desire to be friendly and loving. They need to be taught that true friendship is willing to wound to save from danger and that approving of what the world does is deadly for all parties involved. The Christian has a superpower whereby he can see someone engage with all kinds of evil and speak all kinds of blasphemies, yet, the Christian can still love that person and seek his or her good. Steering others away from destruction by calling them to repentance and faith is never an easy task, but a necessary one. My goal would be to weekly remind students of the greatness of the gospel message so that they might step outside of their comfort zone and witness to their friends.

5. How do you plan to engage parents?

Parents need to be aware of what is happening and being taught in the youth ministry. I would send out a monthly update that is concise and clear. I also want to give resources to help them engage with their kids based on the content of what is being studied. That could be as simple as giving them access to the small group discussion questions for that particular week and encouraging them to follow up with their kids.

Parents also need to be informed of special events well in advance. They should be provided with enough information to make the best decision for their family. I've heard of a couple of students who have not been able to go on mission trips because the parents thought that the trip would be more about having fun than about serving and spiritually growth. My goal is to prevent that misunderstanding.

In every interaction with parents, the youth ministry should have a culture of partnership and support. We are partnering with parents, not usurping their authority and not trying to take up all of their family time. I firmly believe that the ministry that happens within a God-fearing family is more important and effective than the youth ministry.

6. Describe your experience with youth missions trip and your views on local and non-local youth mission trips.

I have been on two youth mission trips as a leader. Lead the Cause in Denver, Colorado and the Butler, PA trip to Fishbone Ministries. Both of these trips were approximately a week long. Denver was with high schoolers and Butler was with middle schoolers. I think that a youth ministry should offer local mission trips and if the church budget allows for it, non-local. I touch on this more in my philosophy of ministry essay.

7. What would you attempt in ministry if you knew you wouldn't fail?

I would plant a church with my wife.