

vision project

Young Adult Dialogues with the First Presidency

"I also know words are not enough.
We need to do something now.
I and other church leaders personally commit
to meet with young adults in various locations
to listen to concerns, perspectives, and hopes.
We want to envision the future of the church with you.
We want to explore models of ministry, mission, and leadership to open more doors
for your participation.

- President Steve Veazey, "A Defining Moment" April 5, 2009

"Young adults, the church needs you. We need you now. We need you to help us become who we are all yearning to become."

—President Steve Veazey, Address to the Church, April 5, 2009

Friend,

Thank you for volunteering to coordinate a *Vision Project* event. In this packet you will find information to help you organize your *Vision Project* event.

I will team with you to help coordinate the event. May you be blessed by the assurance of God's presence as you prepare for this exciting adventure.

Erica Blevins Nye
Young Adult Ministries
eblevins@cofchrist.org
517-881-6535

Vision Project

In his address to the church on April 5, 2009, Steve Veazey and the First Presidency committed to visit with young adults everywhere to capture our vision for Community of Christ. *Vision Project* is their "world tour" to meet with us.

- A member of the First Presidency will visit with groups of young adults around the church for a weekend, full day, or half day—in person or via web conference.
- *Vision Project* events are arranged and supported by Erica Blevins Nye.
- Young adults will share their testimonies and their vision for the mission and future of Community of Christ. Church leaders will listen and take note.
- Participants will explore their personal callings and commitments to serve Jesus Christ in Community of Christ.
- The First Presidency will capture the broad vision and collect specific ideas that are generated. These will inform their decisions as they guide the church into the future.
- *Vision Project* events will include worship, Q&A&Q with a member of the First Presidency, testimony, idea generating, fun, food, and meeting other young adults.
- *Vision Project* events can take various forms. Arrange the event in whatever way suits the young adults in your area best, and Erica will work with you to organize it.

The Reason

As young adults, our participation is vital for Community of Christ to offer relevant ministry in today's world. We are sensitive to the realities of our fast-changing globe. We naturally navigate postmodern culture socially, technologically, and spiritually. And we are deeply aware of where the world most needs the healing and Peace of Jesus Christ. Community of Christ needs our fresh vision to understand who God is calling us to become. Church leadership is deeply aware of this. They want to hear our voice about...

- How is the mission and message of Jesus Christ most relevant in our world now?
- Where do we see the greatest need for Community of Christ ministry in the world today?
- What new models or methods will it take to make it happen?
- Where will we step up to take the lead?

The Goals

- The First Presidency will:
 - Build relationships with young adults.
 - Hear young adults' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities the church must face in their postmodern, "post-Christian" generations.
 - Hear young adults' testimonies of challenges and successes in the church.
 - Take in young adults' vision for what matters most for Community of Christ.
 - Compile and study young adults' responses to several key questions about the church's mission and explore the results with church leadership.
 - Use this input to inform the leadership of Community of Christ into the future.
 - Arrange follow-up initiatives or responses.
- Young adults will:
 - Build relationships with the First Presidency.
 - Recognize the relevance of Community of Christ's ministry in the world today.
 - Discover ways to team with local leadership to initiate change.
 - Make commitments about their participation in Community of Christ's mission.
 - Have an opportunity to ask questions of the First Presidency and interact with them personally.
 - Build stronger relationships with one another.

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Suggested *Vision Project* Schedules

Create your event to best suit the needs of young adults in your area. These suggested models (One Day, Half Day, and Weekend) contain primary elements of dialogue that will make for a fruitful discussion.

One Day Event

9:00 - 10:00	Registration and Mixers
10:00	Welcome and Worship <i>See Opening Worship (page 6)</i>
11:30	Q&A&Q with First Presidency and Lunch
12:30	Daily Prayer for Peace www.cofchrist.org/prayerpeace
12:45	World Café <i>See World Café Instructions (page 9)</i> <i>See World Café Handout (page 10)</i>
2:30	Fun Activities <i>Vision Project Buttons</i>
5:30	Dinner
6:30	Whole Group Discussion; Visioning and Commitments <i>See Whole Group Discussion Instructions (page 11)</i>
7:30	More Fun
8:30	Closing Worship or Campfire

Half Day Event

Because of limited time in half-day events, young adults will need to come prepared to meet with the First Presidency. “Pre-Homework” will be important, exploring the preliminary questions alone or in a group beforehand.

2 hours	Registration, Mixers, Fun and Food
1-hour	Welcome and Worship <i>See Opening Worship (page 6)</i>
1-hour	Q&A&Q with First Presidency and Snacks
1-hour	World Café <i>See World Café Instructions (page 9)</i> <i>See World Café Handout (page 10)</i>
15-minutes	Stretch Break
1-hour	Whole Group Discussion; Visioning and Commitments <i>See Whole Group Discussion Instructions (page 11)</i>
30-minutes	Closing Worship or Campfire <i>Vision Project buttons</i>

Weekend Event

Friday

- 6:00 Registration, Mixers, Fun and Food
7:00 Q&A&Q with First Presidency and Snacks

Saturday

- 8:00 Breakfast
9:00 Welcome and Morning Worship
See Opening Worship (page 6)
10:30 World Café
See World Café Instructions (page 9)
See World Café Handout (page 10)
12:00 Daily Prayer for Peace www.cofchrist.org/prayerpeace
12:15 Lunch and Fun Activities
Vision Project buttons
6:00 Dinner
7:00 Whole Group Discussion; Visioning and Commitments
See Whole Group Discussion Instructions (page 11)
8:30 Evening Worship or Campfire

Sunday

- 8:30 Breakfast
9:30 Closing Worship

Opening Worship: “We Share...”

This suggested order of worship is meant to ground the event’s visioning and discussion in our relationship with Jesus Christ and our call to discipleship. We gather to further the cause of Christ, not to simply compete for our own preferences in church. An informal worship will draw out initial sharing in a comfortable way. Try sitting in a circle or half-circle. The worship moves through various elements that we as a church share:

- *We Share...A Story* - reflect on our own positive testimonies of Community of Christ.
- *We Share...A Mission* - consider why and how we want to share the Good News.
- *We Share...A Restlessness* - a brief opportunity to share our perspective on the church today.
- *We Share...A Hope* - despite the challenges we face, we joyfully set our sights on the promise of God’s call for Community of Christ.

Use a video projector to display the text of any scriptures, songs, or questions.

Ask young adults well in advance to offer prayers or testimonies, so they have time to prepare.

...A Story

Welcome Event Leader

Opening Statements Member of the First Presidency and any other church leader present share their hopes and expectations for the event.

Familiar Praise Songs

Prayer of Expectation Young Adult

Scripture Focus Doctrine & Covenants 163:1
1. “Community of Christ,” your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

Sharing *What do you treasure most about your experience in Community of Christ?*

- **Lead Young Adult Testimony** - Share brief testimony/reflection.
- **Open Sharing** - Open the floor for others to speak to the question.

...A Mission

Song

(continued on next page)

Scripture Focus Doctrine & Covenants 163:2b
163:2b. Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community. The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.

Sharing *We are called to generously share Jesus through our church. What about Christ or the church are you most eager to share?*

- **Lead Young Adult Testimony** - Share brief testimony/reflection.
- **Open Sharing** - Open the floor for others to speak to the question.

...A Restlessness

Scripture Focus Doctrine & Covenants 164 :9a
9 a. Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God’s ultimate vision for the church.

Song

Open Sharing *In just one word, how would you describe Community of Christ today?*

...A Hope

Words from Member of First Presidency The guest member of the First Presidency shares their own hope and vision for Community of Christ. *This should set the tone and expectation for young adults’ visioning work during the gathering.*

Challenge Scripture Doctrine and Covenants 164:9e-f
e. The challenges and opportunities are momentous. Will you remain hesitant in the shadows of your fears, insecurities, and competing loyalties? Or will you move forward in the light of your divinely instilled call and vision?
f. The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.

Song

Prayer of Blessing for the *Vision Project* Event

World Café Instructions

The World Café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims.

World Café discussions can be handled in many ways. You can set up any method depending on the size and nature of your young adult group. Below is a suggested model for your *Vision Project* event. This process has been successful for other groups.

Café Conversations at a Glance:

- Seat **four or five people at small Café-style tables** or in conversation clusters.
- Set up **progressive** (usually four) **rounds of conversation** of approximately 15-20 minutes each.
- Each table has a “table host”. If possible, this person should be a staff member. The table host is a *listener and note-taker*. They should try not to add to the conversation or comment on young adult responses. Keep close notes.
- Encourage members to **write, doodle and draw key ideas** on their tablecloths or to note key ideas a butcher paper tablecloth or placemats in the center of the group.
- At the close of the round, ask table hosts to read back the notes to the group. Check for accuracy and any clarification.
- Upon completing the initial round of conversation, ask participants to move to another table of their choosing. Encourage them to mix with new people. They will serve as travelers or “ambassadors of meaning.” The travelers carry key ideas, themes and questions into their new conversations. Table hosts remain at their table and welcome their new group.
- Encourage the newly formed groups to share the main ideas, themes and questions of the initial conversation. **Link and connect ideas** coming from their previous table conversations—listening carefully and building on each other's contributions.
- By providing opportunities for people to move in several rounds of conversation, **ideas, questions, and themes begin to link and connect**. At the end of the second round, all of the tables or conversation clusters in the room will be *cross-pollinated* with insights from prior conversations.
- After several rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries and insights in a **whole group conversation**. It is in these town meeting-style conversations that patterns can be identified, collective knowledge grows, and possibilities for action emerge.
- **Whatever the format, please use the suggested questions. Encourage participants to think about both the “big picture” vision for the church and local specifics.**

World Café Introduction

Café Etiquette and Guidelines:

- **Focus** on what matters.
- **Contribute** your thinking.
- **Speak** your mind and heart.
- **Listen** deeply to understand.
- **Link** and connect ideas.
- **Listen together** for insights and deeper questions.
- **Play, Doodle, Draw - Have fun!**

*Please focus only on the designated question for each round.
We're brainstorming. Share your own experience, thoughts, and ideas.
We aren't looking for a specific "solution" now.
Dream Big! Be sure to take notes!*

Round One:

What is your experience in Community of Christ? Tell our story!

Round Two:

How is the message of Jesus Christ most needed in our world now? Why do we need to share Christ's Peace? [This initial question is intended to ground our discussions in Christian mission, rather than our own desires from the church.]

Round Three:

What has been your experience in Community of Christ?
What unique gifts does Community of Christ have to serve those needs in the world?

Round Four:

How is Community of Christ called to use our unique gifts to minister in new ways? What new approaches to congregational life, worship, outreach, service, etc. could we try?

Round Five:

What sense of call do you have to serve God, whether it is in Community of Christ or outside of it? How could it be served through Community of Christ?

Whole Group Discussion

The goal of this activity is to dig to the core visions and to hone in on specific ideas from the themes that sprung up in the World Café. The whole group discussion is time for the First Presidency and young adults to share back and forth, openly ask questions, and collaborate in the visioning process. Post notes from the World Café where all can see them and refer to them. It's not necessary to address every question. Choose those that are most meaningful for your young adults. Go where you need to. This is a great time for the First Presidency to ask questions too.

Whole Group Discussion:

- Bring all participants together into a large group.
- With a leader and the First Presidency member guiding the sharing, take notes up front on a notepad.
- Encourage **two-way dialogue** with the First Presidency about responses. Ask for clarification or examples; challenge assumptions; probe for understanding; ask hard questions!
- Discussion together the questions used in the World Café. Or if you wish use some of the questions below.

Whole Group Questions:

- What is your vision for Community of Christ? What would it look like if we lived up to what we're called to become? Be specific.
- What is your vision for a local congregation? What would worship, community outreach, and service experiences look like? Be specific.
- How can young adults step up and take the lead in Community of Christ?
- How could Community of Christ become more relevant and attractive to young adults?
- What commitments would you like to see from local leaders and World Church leadership?

Q & A & Q

Young adults will want time to chat with the member of the First Presidency about any topics that interest them. Question and Answer sessions are a good way for the church leader and young adults to get to know one another and feel more comfortable. And such sessions lay a foundation for open, sincere sharing.

What's the difference between a normal Q&A session and Q&A&Q? The second encourages two-way dialogue. Though posing a question to leadership and receiving an answer demonstrates that the leader is willing to share information with the asker, it can restrict the asker to the role of passive "receiver" of information. For many young adults this type of communication feels contrived and insincere. Q&A&Q encourages askers to follow up answers with any further questions or concerns they have.

Knowing that leaders are authentic enough to be open for clarification, scrutiny, and collaboration builds rapport and will set a positive expectation for collaborative visioning. Those entertaining questions are challenged to be open as questioners dig to the heart of their responses, rather than creating a wall of "pat" answers. Young adults are challenged to engage more deeply in the dialogue, digging in rather than simply listening. Q&A&Q demonstrates that we are all exploring together.

Vision Project Buttons

Create personalized pin-on buttons. It's a fun way to pare down one's personal vision to a few words—and then wear them! Supplies will be provided.

Supplies:

1. Button-making hand press machines
2. Button "assembly rings" (blue, yellow, purple, green, red)
3. Metal button fronts and pin backs
4. Clear plastic button covers
5. *Vision Project* button template (2 ¾ in. circles)
6. Markers - several
7. Scissors - several
8. Button-making Machine Instruction Manual - several

What to Do:

1. Ask young adults to think about their vision for Community of Christ. What two or three words would they choose to describe that vision?
2. Write the condensed vision on a Vision Project button template with a marker. Get creative! ***Stay inside the light blue dotted circle.***
3. Hand out Button-making Machine Instruction Manuals. ***Follow very carefully!*** (Make a button beforehand, so you know how it works!)
4. Stand back to field questions and help out!
5. Afterward, wear your fancy buttons and talk about what your button's vision means.

Closing Worship and Commitments

Some suggestions you might include:

Young Adults Share Commitments:

- How do *you* see yourself contributing to Community of Christ's vision and mission personally? On the local level? On the global level?
- What could *you* do to make Community of Christ more relevant?
- What is *your* specific personal commitment in response to our visioning today?
- What idea will *you* take from this event and share with your pastor or congregation?

Leadership Reflections and Commitments:

- Church leaders in attendance will reflect back the general ideas they heard and what they will be taking away with them from the day. Make space here for young adults to respond and clarify, if they wish.
- The First Presidency guest shares how they plan to take the day's visioning and act on it in some way. What do they see happening next?
- It may be helpful for the event director, the First Presidency guest, Erica, and any other leaders to meet for a few minutes before the Closing Worship and Commitments to debrief the event and consider their responses.

Announcements:

- Planned follow-up events to continue this young adult visioning process. Plan some!
- Young adult, congregation, mission center, or field commitments in response to the discussions.
- Upcoming World Church and young adult *Vision Project* events See www.cofchrist.org/emergence/events
- Introduce the resources that World Church offers young adults:
 - Emergence E-newsletter at www.cofchrist.typepad.com
 - Community of Christ Young Adult Webpage at www.EmergenceNow.org
 - Young Adult Surveys at www.cofchrist.org/emergence/surveys
 - Online giving at www.we-cause.org

Preparation and Follow-up

Preparation: Things to Do before the Event

It will be important to get the thinking and discussion started before the actual event. Young adults will come having considered the questions and more prepared to participate. Some suggestions for this are below.

1. Include in your publicity and event announcements questions for young adults to answer beforehand. Suggested questions:
 - What's the purpose of church?
 - What's the most important ministry that Community of Christ is specially called to do in the world today?
 - How can we “rethink church”? What basic elements of congregational life, worship, outreach, service, etc. could we rethink to help us achieve our Christian purpose?
 - What can Community of Christ (locally and World Church) do to create a church culture that’s relevant and attractive for young adults?
 - What could *you* do to make Community of Christ more relevant?
2. Post these questions in a Facebook group for online discussion. Prompt the conversation.
3. Ask these questions at other young adult gatherings or in congregations.

Follow-up: Things to Do after the Event

1. **Vision Project Event Summary.** Use this to compile responses from the discussion. Fill it out [online](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=FhhXd6UbXnWitt9smLkv0Q_3d_3d) at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=FhhXd6UbXnWitt9smLkv0Q_3d_3d or use included form (page 17) and send to Erica.
2. **Evaluation Form.** Create an evaluation form to note the successes of the event or any points that need to be improved for similar events in the future.
3. Tell your mission center leadership about the experience and share the responses.
4. Very soon after your *Vision Project* event create a follow-up plan to show that this work does not stop at talking and listening, but action will follow! Some ideas:
 - Plan another gathering with mission center leadership to take next steps.
 - Choose a commitment made by a young adult, and work together to achieve it.
 - Team up with a pastor to try alternative forms of worship or service.
 - Organize young-adult led projects for congregations or the mission center. These could include service projects, worship services, or outreach to the community.
 - Pull together a young adult leadership team.
5. Mail thank you notes to all who helped to organize the event and to all participants.

More Planning Ideas

- Work with your mission center staff to secure funding and local volunteer help.
- Keep the event as inexpensive as possible for participants.
- Meals are a good time to ask for a “free will” donation to cover food and other costs.
- Choose a location that is a safe, neutral space for all participants?
- Childcare is always much appreciated.
 - Childcare providers must be youth-worker certified.
 - Event space must be safe for children.
- Recruit volunteers from local congregations to prepare and clean up meals to give young adults more time to focus on activities.
- Where appropriate and comfortable, invite Mission Center presidents to attend. They should be “invisible” observers only, to hear young adult voices.
- Decorate for an energizing, fun environment.
- Registration form: include checkboxes to receive various World Church e-subscriptions (<http://www.cofchrist.org/subscribe.asp>), mission center communications, to serve in mission center or young adult leadership or upcoming projects, etc.
- Try holding consecutive activities in the same room to save travel time in between.
- Build in time to stretch, be active, or hang out. Break up the sitting and talking with fellowship.
- Provide snacks!

Publicity Materials

1. *Vision Project* Logo

Use this graphic on any Facebook events, emails, letters, etc.

2. Fliers

Send these fliers to pastors or other local ministers to post and announce in their congregations. Mail them to area young adults.

3. E-mail Template

Erica will send an email announcement to the young adults in your area.

Send the complete *Event Information* below to eblevins@cofchrist.org at least ***four weeks*** before your event.

4. YA Emergence Website and E-Newsletter

We want to publicize your upcoming event on the World Church and YA Emergence websites: www.CofChrist.org and www.EmergenceNow.org. This information may also be included in the *Herald* or other World Church publications. Send the complete *Event Information* below to eblevins@cofchrist.org at least ***two months*** before your event.

5. Facebook Events:

A great way to publicize your *Vision Project* event and communicate details.

6. Calling Campaign

Call each young adult in your area to extend a personal invitation. A personal invite is the best way to get a good turnout!

Event Information:

- Jurisdiction
- Event Location
- Event Dates
- Local Director / Contact Person Name; Email; Phone Number
- Registration Costs
- Link to your own webpage, Facebook event, or other post online
- Any other special information
- (Optional) A photo of your group to include



5. Young Adult Leadership:
What sense of call do you have to serve God, whether it is in Community of Christ or outside of it? How could it be served through Community of Christ?
and/or
How could young adults step up and take the lead in Community of Christ?

6. Young Adults' Vision - Global:
What would Community of Christ look like if it lived up to what we're called to become?

7. Young Adults' Vision - Local:
What would congregations look like if they lived up to what they're called to become?

8. Attracting Young Adults:
How could Community of Christ become more relevant and attractive to young adults?

9. Church Leader Commitments:
What commitments would young adults like to see from local and World Church leaders?

10. Rate your *Vision Project* event (circle the option that best applies)

Relevance to young adult needs	Not relevant	Moderately relevant	Very relevant
Enjoyable for young adults	Not enjoyable	Moderately enjoyable	Very enjoyable
Productivity for your young adult ministry	Not productive	Moderately productive	Very productive
Young adults' engagement in activities	Not engaged	Moderately engaged	Very engaged
Young adults' attitudes about event	Negative	Indifferent	Positive
Event support from World Church	Inadequate support	Acceptable support	Excellent support
Event follow-up	Unlikely to follow up locally	Likely to follow up locally	Will positively follow up locally
Motivation/effect on young adults	Not motivated by event	Moderately motivated by event	Very motivated by event
Turnout	Very few of our young adults attended	About half of our young adults attended	Most of our young adults attended