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Pastors and Parents Differ on Youth Ministry Goals ^[1]

Barna Research Releases in **Family & Kids** ? March 22, 2017

A few years ago, The Atlantic ran a cover story called "The Overprotected Kid." ^[2] The piece argued that a preoccupation with safety has stripped childhood of independence, risk taking and discovery without making it safer. The ensuing discussion raised a number of questions about the tug-of-war between a parent's protective instincts and their desire to raise fearless kids. This dynamic plays out in schools and child care centers across the country, but is acutely felt in youth ministries. Are the parental priorities of safety shared by youth pastors and leaders? Whose goals take precedence? In partnership with Youth Specialties and YouthWorks, Barna conducted a major study on the state of youth ministry in the United States, which included a look at the expectations of pastors, youth leaders, and parents.

Believe discipleship is a high
priority of youth ministry.



72%

Youth Pastors



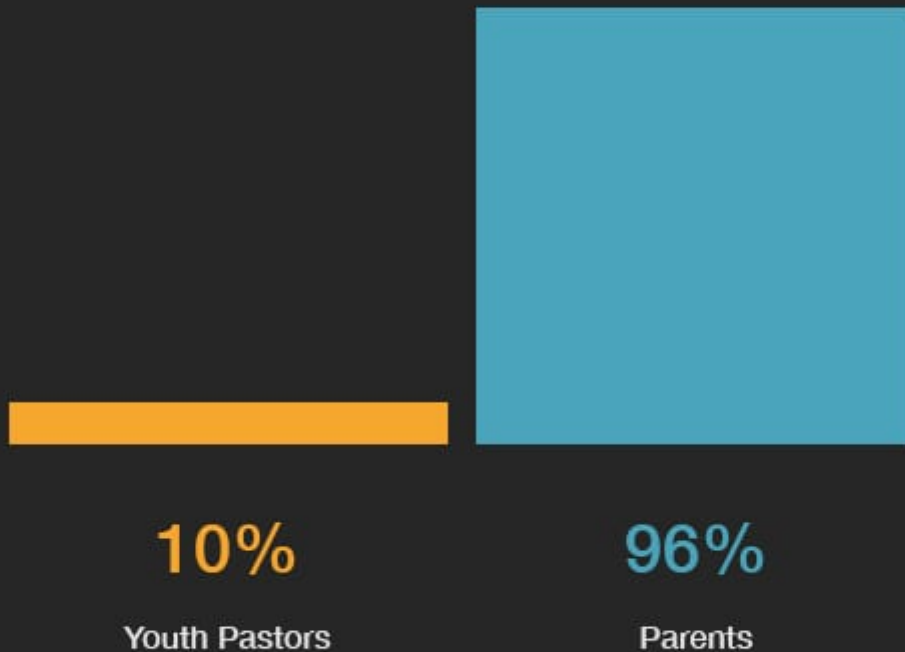
75%

Parents

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Believe safety is an important goal of youth ministry.



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The Priorities of Senior Pastors & Youth Ministers

Barna researchers found that senior pastors and youth leaders are generally aligned when it comes to their thinking about what youth ministry should accomplish. When they are asked to identify the top two goals of youth ministry, a substantial majority of church leaders choose ?discipleship and spiritual instruction? as one of their highest priorities. Seven in 10 senior pastors (71%) and three-quarters of youth pastors (75%) say this is one of their top goals.

Outlining Parent Expectations

Parents have their own set of priorities when it comes to their kids? youth ministry experience. Most parents have a hard time narrowing them down! A majority of parents whose teens regularly attend youth group rate each and every feature as either ?very? or ?somewhat important.?

Safety is of paramount importance to virtually all parents (96% very + somewhat important). Presumably this would include their kids being kept safe from physical harm, but many parents may also think of safety in emotional terms, especially since the recent introduction of ?safe spaces? on campuses across the country.

Read the complete article ^[3]

Reftagger

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