



Sticky Faith Cohort

Directed by the Fuller Youth Institute
Starting in January 2015

Vision and Frequently Asked Questions

Note: For an initial overview, please first see <http://stickyfaith.org/sticky-faith-cohort>

Vision

Recent research indicates that 40-50% of youth group graduates—like those at your church—don't stick with their faith and fail to connect with a faith community after high school.¹ In order to respond to this vast faith drop-off, the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) has studied 500 youth group graduates from around the country during their first three years in college to try to help families and churches instill in young people a faith that lasts, or Sticky Faith.

For the last few years, the Sticky Faith data and its implications have been shared nationwide through a host of venues, including seven *Sticky Faith* books and curriculum products for leaders, students, and parents, presentations at major ministry conferences, stickyfaith.org, and social media channels. One of the highlights has been our **Sticky Faith Cohorts**: dynamic learning groups of up to 30 innovative churches committed to dialogue about the research and apply it to their settings to offer more transformative youth and family ministry.

FYI is looking for churches to join the 2015 Sticky Faith Cohort. Over 130 churches have already benefited from the cohort experience. As one leader noted afterward, “*This was nothing less than transformational.*”

Frequently Asked Questions

How will our church benefit from the Sticky Faith Cohort? Can you give some more specific explanation about the process, content, and implementation?

1. You'll get firsthand access to groundbreaking research conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute and other research partners. This includes research highlighted in *Sticky Faith* and *Sticky Faith: Youth Worker Edition*, as well as Chap Clark's *Hurt 2.0*. Further, you will have access to leading Fuller faculty, including Dr. Kara Powell, Dr. Chap Clark, Dr. Scott Cormode, and Dr. Tommy Givens.

¹ Barna Update, “Most Twentysomethings Put Christianity on the Shelf Following Spiritually Active Teen Years.” *The Barna Group*, 2006, September 16, 2006; George H. Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll*, 2006; and Christian Smith with Patricial Snell, *Souls in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 105, 108, 109, and 116.

2. You'll gain new ministry paradigms based on research insights, as well as ways to modify existing ministry programs to increase transformation and help:
 - A. Empower parents in their own kids' faith development
 - B. Involve the entire church in intergenerational ministry to teenagers
 - C. Foster students' faith identity development
 - D. Move beyond "the gospel of sin management" to the Biblical gospel
 - E. Structure the youth group environment to facilitate growth
 - F. Facilitate change in the youth ministry and church
3. Under the coaching of FYI, your church will develop a Breakthrough Plan (approximately 5-8 pages) that will enable you to increase your ministry effectiveness. FYI will provide the template for this plan. The extent to which the plan is completed and enacted during the cohort year is dependent on the church team and congregation. The FYI team will offer personalized consulting by phone following the submission of the plan in May 2015. This Breakthrough Plan is designed to be highly-customizable to your specific church context; FYI does not anticipate that every church will fit into the same "Sticky Faith mold," but rather that particular aspects of the research and implications will take root more intensely in particular church contexts.
4. Your church will be connected to other leading churches and youth ministries who will be sharpened not only by FYI, but also by each other. Churches often note this as one of the highly-valuable aspects of the process. You will also hear from leaders who have participated in previous cohorts as they return to share insights from their Sticky Faith journeys.

What are the "hidden" costs to our team? What are our responsibilities as potential cohort participants that aren't evident?

The bulk of the responsibility for maintaining momentum for each church during the cohort process usually sits with the team leader (often the youth pastor or an associate pastor with oversight of youth and family ministry). This responsibility includes coordinating team participation in the two summits (including travel arrangements) and monthly webinars, spearheading the Breakthrough Plan process and submitting that plan to FYI, coordinating regular (often monthly or bi-weekly) meetings of a Sticky Faith team and/or bringing Sticky Faith issues to other staff/oversight groups within your church, completing short readings, and submitting occasional short assignments to FYI (usually no more than a page or two of text, in preparation for or follow up from a summit; approximately 3 times in the year). Other team members can expect to invest time in occasional reading, team meetings, summit participation, and webinar participation (though leaders often determine from month to month which team members should participate in particular webinars). Team leaders may determine based on their context whether to include the same or different team members in the February and October summit.

We do not anticipate that participation will incur significant additional time on the part of church staff or administrative assistants. The bulk of the work involved is big-picture work (philosophy

of ministry, overall structures and processes, and long-term visioning), with an eye to evaluating and restructuring for the future as needed. Some churches attempt more change than others during the yearlong process, depending on the current climate for change in the congregation and the extent to which the Breakthrough Plan determines needed programmatic or structural changes. This varies quite a bit from church to church.

What's the schedule for 2015?

Church Cohort members (team leaders and any staff/volunteers they choose to include) are expected to devote two to five hours per month to reading and preparation (the most time intensive periods will likely precede the two summits). In addition, participation in the Cohort involves the following youth pastor/team leader participation:

- January: Completion of an initial assessment to help FYI understand each church's needs. Participate in one hour introductory webinar.
- February: **Summit #1 February 11-13, 2015** at Fuller Seminary to share research and implications and give church leaders time to make application to their own settings.
- March: One hour group Webinar with Kara Powell and Scott Cormode.
- April: Submit Breakthrough Plan to your assigned Coach and participate in one hour group Webinar.
- May: FYI coaching staff to offer one hour of consulting on implementation of a Breakthrough Plan to each church by phone.
- June-September: One hour Group Webinars with supplemental reading and guest speakers as appropriate.
- October: **Summit #2 October 14-16, 2015** at Fuller Seminary to continue learning and applying research, share initial outcomes of Breakthrough Plans, and learn additional practices to help facilitate ongoing change in your context
- November: FYI coaching staff to offer one hour of consulting on implementation of a Breakthrough Plan to each church by phone.
- November-December: One hour Group Webinar with supplemental reading and guest speakers as appropriate.

Note that in-person summits in February and October generally run from **2:30 on Wednesday afternoon until 11:30 Friday morning**. We have found that this typically allows for teams traveling from and returning to the Eastern time zone to arrive the same day we begin and depart the same day we end without requiring additional overnight stays. The summit time is divided between content presentations, interactions with other teams, and processing with your own church team. We ask each team leader to select up to 4 participants to join each summit gathering (1-2 additional participants are allowed at an additional cost of \$100 each to cover food and supply expenses). These leaders should be selected strategically based on who can best collaborate toward ministry and church-wide change. Often leaders choose youth ministry staff, children's pastors, college pastors, senior/executive pastors, worship pastors, or family pastors to join them.

Also note that FYI will set up the monthly webinars at a standard time. For example, this year webinars were typically held at 9:00 AM PST on Wednesdays or Thursdays. FYI records the

webinars by audio and video for later listening or viewing by participants who miss the live webinar.

What are the qualifications of invited churches?

Churches eligible to apply to be part of the Sticky Faith Cohort are those who are:

1. Healthy and driven by a clear sense of mission.
2. Willing to ask tough questions about the effectiveness of their own ministry to students.
3. Led by a youth pastor or other team leader able to commit to the time commitment previously explained.
4. In addition to the youth leader's attendance, able to send 1-4 key leaders (senior pastor, executive pastor, children's pastor, key elder/deacon) to both 3-day summits to be held at Fuller in Pasadena.
5. Willing to participate in post-cohort written assessment as requested (likely through short questionnaires that would happen no more than once per year).
6. Able to contribute financially toward the costs of the Cohort. **The Cohort fee is \$4,000/church.** In addition, churches are responsible for minimal reading materials, their own travel to Pasadena for both summits, and their housing while in Pasadena (the \$4,000 fee covers the vast majority of meals during the summits).

Who has been part of the Sticky Faith cohort in the past? What geographic regions are they from? Could I talk to them?

To date we have trained 130 church teams through the cohort process. Participating churches range geographically from West to East coast, though in the past about 1/3-1/4 have been from California. Denominational backgrounds have included Presbyterian, United Methodist, Nazarene, Lutheran, Baptist, Congregational, Covenant, Church of Christ, United Church of Christ, Anglican, and various non-denominational churches. A majority of past churches have been over 1,000 members, though this is certainly not a requirement for participation. Church size has ranged from 300 to over 10,000.

If you would like to speak with a leader from a participating church, please let us know and we can connect you with a leader from a similar congregation if possible. You may also be interested in seeing testimonies of a few past participants in our highlight video found at <http://stickyfaith.org/sticky-faith-cohort>.

Will this opportunity be offered again in the future?

Yes!! Note, however, that we will not make definitive plans until sometime in 2015. If you would like to be added to a contact list for a 2016 cohort, please let us know.

Further questions?

For additional questions, please contact Haley Smith, Cohort Administrator of the Fuller Youth Institute at haleysmith@fuller.edu or 626-584-5546.