



The Basics: How to Start a Single Adult Ministry



The Basics Stats of Single Adult Ministry

Note: This guide is a smaller version of the entire seminar for how to start a single ministry. It also does not cover the lengthy area of leadership development, maintaining and caring for your ministry. This guide is simply a place to start so that you don't start for the wrong reasons or forget some critical areas to success. Blessings to all that are called to this amazing journey of single adult ministry.

Kris Swiatocho, Director, The Singles Network Ministries

48%-52% of the population is young and single adult. (Currently, over 82 million unmarried adults live in the United States, constituting the highest percentage of single adults than at any other time in history.) 1

Why the recent explosion in the number of singles?

1. Young people are postponing marriage (or not marrying) as social values change.
2. There is a small increase in the number of individuals in our society who have chosen to remain single permanently.
3. The number of divorces in America continues to rise.

We can't keep ignoring young and single adults. These adults represent more than \$600 billion in purchasing power, although little is written about this large group of purchasers.

- Single adults are more convenience-seeking than married's.
- Single adults are more variety-seeking than married's.
- Single adults are less averse to risk than married's.
- Single adults are less price-conscious than married's.
- Single adults are more innovative than married's.
- Single adults are more brand-conscious than married's.
- Single adults display more impulsive purchase behavior than married's.
- Single adults view television more often than married's.

Singles never-married are the largest group. They have the most flexible use of their time and money and are the least used and reached in the church. Single-parent families have the least flexible use of their time and money and have the most needs in the church.



Reasons why singles ministries fail:

1. Some churches are not called to have singles' ministries (Note: Every church is called to minister to singles). Some churches are called to have something smaller such as a Bible study, book club, or divorce recovery ministry.
2. They imitate other church programs that are not necessarily workable at their church. If a church close by has a great single parent ministry or young adult ministry, etc...work with them, partner, etc..don't try and duplicate them yourself but instead, find out what God is wanting you to do.
3. Leaders get overworked and over-committed, trying to do it all in 6 months. First, they don't even know who the leaders are for their ministry. They don't develop a leadership structure, outlining the goals of the ministry. The same one or two people try to do it all. Also, its important to have co-leaders. Your leadership should reflect who your audience focus should be. If you only have women in leadership, that is all you will get. If you only have divorced singles, it will be harder to bring in those that have never been divorced, etc...
4. Leaders forget to delegate and wait on God and as a result, they get burned out. Remember, this is a ministry to reach and grow single adults. It's important that you build your team to help you with this task. It's important to delegate work out so that the ministry is not just about your ideas but others.

Note: Single adult ministries have to continually be poured into as they change. Discipleship is critical. It's better to pour yourself into a few people who will duplicate themselves rather than trying to do it yourself. So what if all the ideas and plans you have created don't get done? Who's ministry is this anyway?

Reasons you SHOULD'NT start a single adult ministry in your church:

1. To give singles a social club*.
2. Because other churches have one.
3. Because of the need or want to help our singles get married.
4. Because singles have demanded the leadership in the church to have one.

*If you have a Christ-focused ministry with Bible study, prayer, leadership development, the social will happen on its own. It will come as a result without you having to do anything.

Reasons you SHOULD start a singles' ministry in your church:

1. To develop an effective outreach in the growing number of single adults in your church and community
2. To enhance church growth
3. To help fulfill the Great Commission
4. To help renew the vision and purpose of your congregation.
5. To meet the needs of single adults who want spiritual growth, healing opportunities, and social fellowship.



Before you Start a Single Adult Ministry

ALL CHURCHES ARE NOT CALLED TO HAVE A SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY...
but ALL CHURCHES ARE CALLED TO MINISTER TO SINGLE ADULTS.

You must have three things in place before starting a single adult ministry:

1) Prayer

This should be on-going: daily, weekly, and with others. As you pray, God will bring the right people to help lead this ministry. It's important to start establishing goals and your mission (this will change as your ministry changes and grows). Praying for each other is also important. Please note, if you aren't get together to pray as a team (even if its you and your pastor only), your ministry will die. Prayer is the start place for everything. Prayer will help you decide the direction of your ministry, who will be on your team, goals, problems, etc...Also, letting your prayer team of your church know what you are doing and your prayer needs will help in the communication of your ministry to the whole church body.

2) Support of staff/leaders*

You will need the support of your pastor/church/staff and other singles for this ministry to work. Supporters must understand your passion/vision for this ministry. Please see the article on how to talk to your pastor on my site at www.TheSinglesNetwork.org, click on tools and articles. Research is critical in making your case. For example, getting demographics from your city/town council (of how many single adults live in your area, including widows, single parents, young, old etc...) are valuable in assessing the population group you will be working with as well as getting a printout of all the single adults in your church. Educating your pastor/staff on the needs of single adults is key if they are going to support you and the vision God has given you. Also take this time to find out what other ministries are in the area. Meet with them to share your ideas, gain support and encouragement. Join forces on retreats, conferences, socials, etc...

3) Opportunity to disciple/develop leadership

A core group of committed individuals (should cover the demographic of the single adults in your church/community that you are trying to reach) should be developed with an opportunity of continued training. Single adult ministries are constantly changing (and should to stay fluid) due to marriage, job changes, moving, etc...,so it's important to have the structure available for discipleship and training. Please see samples of a ministry structure outline and job descriptions on my site at www.TheSinglesNetwork.org, click on tools, then articles. If you build a core team of leaders to lead your ministry, but you don't tell them what you expect from them, you don't train them, come along side them, pray with them, etc...then how do you expect them to lead others? You have to lead by example. Also know that your leaders will change every few months. This is OK and to be expected.



*Sometimes the support isn't there the way you would like. You may have to start the singles ministry first to prove the value of it. This is fine but remember, you should always be working towards getting the support at some point in time. Keeping your pastor/church in the loop is critical.

OK, I know we need to be praying, we need our church to help and we need to develop a team, but then what?

1. Determine scheduling and facility needs. (Nursery, classrooms, etc.)
2. Determine what budget funds are available and needed. (Sample outline on www.TheSinglesNetwork.org, click on tools then articles.)
3. Communicate through publicity and promote the specifics of the new ministry (who, what, when, where, why, cost, expectations, etc.). Start a database with the newspaper, radio, and TV contacts. Make sure the church website is up to date (know that 99% of all singles under 45 go there first).
4. Take care of yourself. If you aren't healthy, then you can't lead anyone else to be.
5. Patience! Remember that God is in control. We must in our enthusiasm be sensitive to His timing and His will. In the long run, it is better to take time to develop good relationships and accountability than to rush and have to redevelop or reconcile misunderstandings. (Ensure that your leaders believe as you do and as your church does.) Stay open to God's continuing leadership. Ministries should change as needs and methods dictate. Enjoy and remember some days will be tough but overall it can be the most rewarding ministry there is.

What are some directions we could go as far as a ministry?

- Sunday school/small group
- Bible study/book club
- Divorce recovery (www.DivorceCare.org)
- Single parent
- Once a month lunch or dinner with fellowship only
- Service project focused
- Event based such as connecting for finding things in common, sports theme, craft theme
- Road-trip based such as retreats, conferences, ski or beach trip

1 These stats are from two websites: 2004 and 2007 information.

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/002265.html

<http://www.unmarriedamerica.org/unmarried-majority-table.htm>

For more information on how to start a single adult ministry including leadership development, contact Kris Swiatocho of The Singles Network Ministries at Kris@TheSinglesNetwork.org or by calling 919.779.3686 or 919.434.3611.