

sunz ADVENTURE

ISSN 1176-5143

YOUR STORY



INSIDE

YOUR STORY

BUILDING CHRISTIAN
LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

okid
TO GROW
Tipu
sunz children's ministry training
MAGAZINE INSIDE

EDITORIAL



*"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."
—1 Corinthians 3:6*

Kia ora tātou. Ngā mihi mahana me ngā kupu aroha—warm and loving greetings to you all.

Spring has arrived, and so I ventured down the back of my garden to check the veggie patch. After a winter of neglect, it was not good! Weeds had sprouted everywhere and, at first, I assumed nothing edible was growing. But as I investigated further, there in the back corner was a rhubarb plant, and it was doing surprisingly well. I cut some of the stalks, lightly stewed them, and enjoyed eating it with my whānau.

Like the rhubarb, God grows amazing things in the lives of young people, and He is not dependant on the surroundings to help. If He wants to bring faith to life, He will.

But it is also true that just as a better environment would make it easier for my veggies, so we can do things to help encourage faith.

That means that anything we can learn about young people, and their faith process is particularly important.

...ANYTHING WE CAN LEARN ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEIR FAITH PROCESS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT.

This Adventure highlights some of the discoveries confirmed and made about young people and their faith journey in recent Australian research—and there is plenty for us to ponder. I encourage you to get a coffee (or a dish of rhubarb) and sit down for an enjoyable and informative read.

As you read, please be praying that God will be at work in the lives of our young people.▲

Ngā mihi nui,

HILARY HAGUE

National Director
Scripture Union New Zealand

ISSUE 4 | 2025

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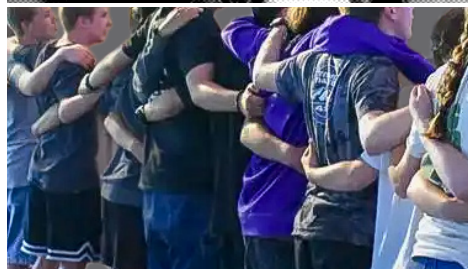
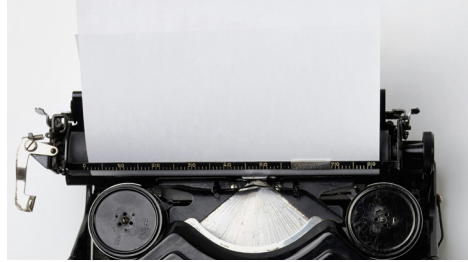
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PRODUCED BY THE SUNZ TEAM
DESIGNED BY WINDSORCREATIVE

COVER PHOTO:
BEYOND EXPERIENCE APRIL 2024



NEVILLE BARTLEY
| SUNZ Youth Team Leader

So, what was so special about this *Your Story* project? Well, the research data backed up and proved what youth-orientated agencies had thought all along and highlighted the importance of relationship.



4 www.sunz.org.nz

What were these five key findings?

1. FAITH HAS A NARRATIVE

Faith is more about story than propositions. We identify eight distinctive journeys of faith that young people may be on.

2. FAITH GROWS IN A RELATIONAL ECOSYSTEM

Faith journeys are shaped as young people interact with a network of surrounding influences.

3. A.B.O.U.T. RELATIONSHIPS

Constructive discipling relationships offer Acceptance, build Belonging, promote Ownership, develop Understanding, and are anchored in Trust.

4. RELATIONALLY GROUNDED DISCIPLING ACTION

The effectiveness of discipling actions grows as relationships strengthen.

5. ENGAGING RESOURCES

When young people face challenges to faith, disciplers help them activate resources present in their discipling ecology.¹

These findings show that there is no one silver bullet or magic formula to ensure a young person will grow well and strong in their faith. Likewise, it showed that there is no single thing that occurs that will turn a young person away from their faith. What it does clearly show is that multiple people have impact on a young person's faith journey; parents, parents

of friends, children and youth ministry leaders, other adults in their church community—all have an influence on the faith story of a young person.

What are the takeaways for us?

Pay attention to where a young person's faith experience has come from and where it is going. Give special attention to how young people talk about the challenges that they are facing in their journey of faith—not just what those challenges are, but the significance or weight of the challenge in the young person's experience.

Build rich ecosystems of spiritual support, not relying on just one favoured avenue of support, and not being overly concerned by the threat of one particular challenge.

A good relationship with a good person grows faith. Be very careful to exercise power sensitively, doing all you can to promote agency.

The better the relationship with young people, the wider range of discipling actions are available. Build a strong base so you can ascend the discipling pyramid with care.

Help young people to make use of their ecosystem of faith when they are confronted by challenges.

We are excited about this research, and about the possibility of doing the research in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2026. To finish I will use a quote from the presentation by Dr Rowan Lewis, "A good relationship with a good person grows faith." I hope you enjoy diving deeper into this *Your Story* research in the articles that follow. 🌱

¹ <https://www.convergeoceania.com/yourstory>

MEET THE SUNZ YOUTH TEAM

Basic
SAPATI TIMA

30 HP



Auckland Youth Consultant

REVEREND SLAM

Play this attack when in need of a ordained reverend with a Masters in Theology.

20

PEACEFUL STRIKE

This attack is the ultimate act of peace. Use when in need of mediation and calm vibes.

15

STATS: 15+ years dedicated service to God, most recent team member, Instagram expert (creates a epic reel)

Basic
NEVILLE BARTLEY

50 HP



Youth Ministry Leader

STORYTIME SWIPE

Use this attack when a story, example or analogy of any kind is needed.

20

VISION ENCOUNTER

Ultimate leadership attack, cast a vision and plan informed by the Lord.

15

STATS: 30 years ministry experience, best hair on the youth team, longest standing SUNZ worker on the team.

Basic
LARISSA PEARCE

30 HP



Otago & Southland Youth Consultant. Length: .

CONNECTOR PUNCH

Use this attack when connections are needed to be made between people.

20

CREATIVE TUSSELE

This attack is perfect for when innovative ideas or a fresh perspective is needed on something.

15

STATS: 10+ years early childhood teaching, lover of decaf coffee, often has to travel the furthest.

Basic
ELI SAVILL

30 HP



Waikato & Bay of Plenty Youth Consultant. Length

THEOLOGY COMBAT

Use this attack when theological concepts/Biblical knowledge is needed.

20

HUMOUR SMASH

This attack is for relationship building and when in need of a good laugh.

15

STATS: top level BBQ skills, 50+ SUNZ van driving time, counsellor in training (stay tuned).

Basic
PIPER CLARE

25 HP



YT Admin & Wellington Youth Consultant

ADMIN STRIKE

Use this move to get things done ASAP

20

RESEARCH RUSH

Need some resources, research or other information, use this attack.

15

STATS: drinks at least 1 coffee per day, 24 years at SUNZ, has the most decorated desk in the office.

See these cards in
larger print and read
about our Youth
Team on our website
sunz.org.nz/youth-consultancy/



YOUR STORY

ELI SAVILL

| SUNZ Youth Consultant, Waikato - Bay of Plenty

faith has a narrative

As a parent, I have a few hopes and dreams for my children. There are key milestones we look forward to—like walking, talking, and learning to ride a bike. In a moment, they transition from a crawler to a walker. These are moments we hold on to as markers of development. As parents, we only want the best for our children, and we look to these milestones to assure ourselves that they are growing in the right way.

For me, it's not just these moments that matter but also the spiritual ones. Moments such as baptism, communion, or being born again are important. However, it's not only these big milestones that count.

A large part of the *Your Story* research is the recognition that faith is more than just moments or silver bullets. Rather, faith is a narrative that builds and grows over time. This narrative is a complex tapestry woven for the individual. Each moment builds to the next, helping develop a rich story that leads them closer to God.

Our lives are made of moments—moments tied together to create the narratives through which we see ourselves, and how we see ourselves in the world. The Converge study looked at how different faith narratives developed. For some, the plot points led them deep into faith; for others, they led to rejecting Christ.

Converge discovered eight different faith journeys that young people are on. They noted: “These eight narratives take account of the changes that occurred over time in young people’s belief, practice, experience, and religious identification.” Converge recognised that faith is dynamic, and that movement between the eight different stages is normal.

The stages are: **Embracing, Persisting, Wavering, Coasting, Fading, Rejecting, Refusing, and Distancing.** Each of these sits within two groups: Christian or non-Christian. Embracing and Distancing lie at different ends of the spectrum. Each represents a different posture towards Christianity. Embracing and Persisting show active engagement with

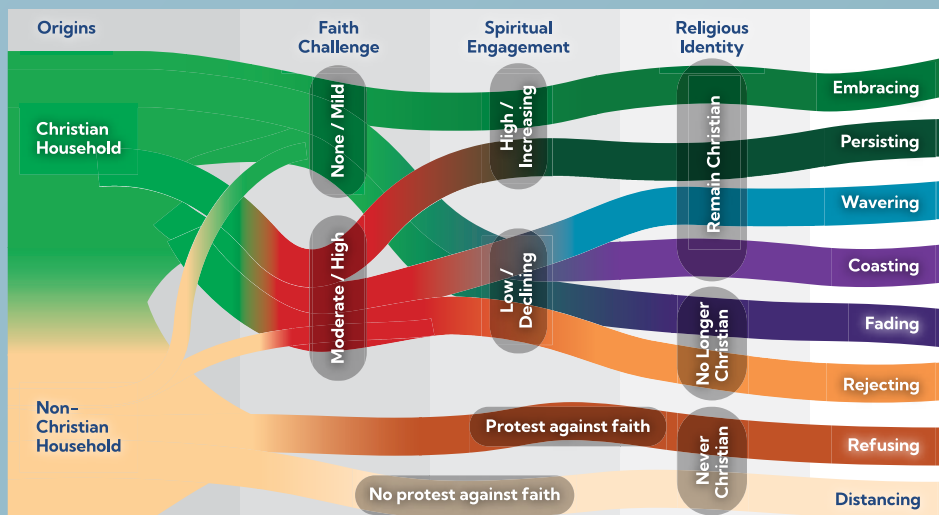


Figure 1: Faith journeys

Christianity. Wavering and Coasting represent disengagement and moving away. Fading and Rejecting reflect beginning to disidentify with Christianity. Finally, Refusing and Distancing reflect an irreligious position.

Each of these plotlines tells a story. As we look through the data, the numbers may tempt us to see people as fixed, set in stone. But the stories behind them tell us of a journey, not a destination. People can and do move—someone fading can come to embrace faith again, while someone persisting may turn to rejecting. These plotlines are dynamic.

When we move away from a simple binary of ‘saved’ versus ‘not saved’ and look at faith as a journey, we see something different. When we shift from fear to love as our motivator for evangelism and discipleship, we can join young people on their faith journeys. Fear sees only the negative side of these

plotlines and convinces us we need a silver bullet to see everyone saved. It leaves us searching for that magic formula: “As long as I don’t do this, and if I just do that, then the people I care about will be safe.”

But *Your Story* reminds us that faith journeys are not one-size-fits-all. What works for one person may not work for another. For instance, Harper (18) shares:

“I grew up with two Christian parents and four Christian grandparents, so I have never not known that God is there. Every night we would pray as a family, every dinner we would say grace... As a pre-teen I became involved in confirmation classes and went to Christian youth camps, which helped me connect with young people my age who shared my beliefs. I don’t remember having any serious doubts about faith ... the people in my life - my parents, sisters, and grandparents - have been

WHEN WE MOVE AWAY FROM A SIMPLE BINARY OF 'SAVED' VERSUS 'NOT SAVED' AND LOOK AT FAITH AS A JOURNEY, WE SEE SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

very influential and supportive. [In the future] I will continue to be a firm believer in Christ and hope to start sharing that more with my friends."

This is the plotline of someone who is embracing their faith. Compare this with Sophie (20), who is rejecting:

"I got baptised when I was in Year 9 as an attempt to get closer to God. Everyone in my life told me that being close to God was the most important thing, but I never felt it. I went on two mission trips with school to try and jumpstart my faith. I could never find anything that worked... I deconstructed my faith as a desperate last attempt, but it only made me see how I really don't believe in the God I had been told to believe in all my life. I am no longer a Christian. I am happier, healthier, more confident, and more content than ever. Every part of my life—apart from

my relationship with my parents—benefitted when I walked away from the church. I will admit I still harbour bitterness towards the church, but I try not to. It's simply not for me."

Here are two people with similar backgrounds. Both were surrounded by people encouraging them in their faith. Both engaged in Christian activities. Yet what encouraged one did not work for the other.

So, what can we do? We need to be ready to have discipling relationships with young people—relationships not led by fear but by love, not marked by condemnation but by understanding and listening, helping young people navigate their faith journeys.

Research found: "Narratives of faith for all who currently identify as Christian or did so at some time in the past: 73% of faith narratives reported some kind of faith challenge, and 45% of these were of moderate or major significance."

You see, "Our challenge is to remember that there's more going on in a young person's life than what they're presenting to you right now. Constructive discipleship works to understand the significance of this present moment in the light of where a young person has come from, and where they might be headed."

We have the privilege of journeying alongside young people as they begin to navigate what faith means to them. And in these moments and challenges, they can discover more about Jesus. 🌸

YOUR STORY

LARISSA PEARCE

| SUNZ Youth Consultant, Otago - Southland

faith grows in a relational ecosystem

Growing up, a book that had a lasting impact on my faith was *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. What stood out for me was the sense that Christian's life was the story—with characters, events, and scenes that all contributed to their journey. Christian was journeying towards a destination (the Celestial City in the book) and the people / things he encountered along the way were either an encouragement, or a distraction for his pilgrimage through life.

In the same way, our faith journeys are shaped by our experiences (often from an early age), and how we encounter and interact with the influences that surround us, and how we internalise or make sense of those experiences. *Your Story* calls this as a 'relational ecosystem.'

Young people's faith journeys are influenced by internal and external factors, which can be negative (contrary) or positive (supportive) to their faith formation. Internal Factors arise from within the thoughts, feelings, actions, or choices of a young person. External

factors arise from the relationships with individuals and groups, and the circumstances that are part of a young person's life. Supportive factors uphold and reinforce growth in Christian faith, while contrary factors problematise and disrupt growth in Christian faith.

The presence of faith challenges can serve to strengthen faith when met with effective supports. The idea of a relational ecosystem is that it seeks to offer a variety of effective supports. We are not soloists on our faith journey – we do not, and in fact cannot, do this alone.

Like human development theory ACEs (adverse childhood experiences), we all have experiences in life. Whether they have a negative, positive, or neutral impact on an individual depends on risk factors and protective factors. In the case of the *Your Story* research, contrary factors could be seen as the risk factors; and the supportive factors could be considered protective factors for faith formation.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Establish a culture that builds relationships and facilitates discipleship
- Provide variety of opportunities for youth to encounter God, ask questions both personally, and within a community of believers
- Celebrate and encourage young people, pray with and for them
- Share stories of faith, doubt, encountering Jesus
- Utilise the body of Christ—it takes a village after all

3 KEY IDEAS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

- 1. Build rich ecosystems of spiritual support.** Develop rich ecosystems loaded with supportive factors.
- 2. Do not rely on a silver bullet.** No single factor or group of factors proved to be decisive in determining long term commitment to faith.
- 3. Do not fear the poison chalice.** There is no single obstacle or challenge that alone will spell the end of a young person's spiritual health.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Think about your own faith formation

- When you were 16, which internal and external, supportive and contrary

factors can you identify in your own journey to that point?

- Describe how each factor helped and / or hindered your faith journey.
- What transformed, or could have, a contrary factor into a supportive one, or a supportive factor into a contrary one for you?
- How would you describe the spiritual/ religious 'actors' around you on your faith journey? Who added richness to your ecosystem? Who didn't? What was their impact on your faith journey?

THINK ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON YOU ARE JOURNEYING WITH

- Which internal and external, supportive and contrary factors can you see in the faith journey this young person has been on?
- How has each factor helped and/or hindered their faith journey?
- How would you describe the spiritual/ religious 'actors' around this young person? Who has added richness to their relational ecosystem? Who hasn't? What has been the impact on their faith journey?
- Do other young people you know come to mind? What internal, external, supportive and contrary factors can you see in their faith journeys? How could you promote a rich ecosystem for them in your youth ministry context? 

YOUR STORY

SAPATI TIMA

| SUNZ Youth Consultant, Auckland

a . b . o . u . t . relationships

The *Your Story* research survey found that a young person's faith grows most through authentic relationships with people of faith. These relationships thrive on five qualities valued by young people—**Acceptance, Belonging, Ownership, Understanding, and Trust (A.B.O.U.T.)**.

ACCEPTANCE

Young people grow spiritually when they are welcomed and accepted as they are—without needing to earn love or hide their struggles. Unconditional acceptance creates a safe space where doubts, questions, and growth are embraced.

BELONGING

Young people desire to be a part of the faith community where they feel that they are valued and included as members of God's family. It's not just about attending but having fellowship. When a young person knows and feels that they belong, their faith will likely be strengthened more; also helping them through life's challenges.

OWNERSHIP

Young people should take ownership of their personal faith. We need to not impose but create a space that would empower teens to take responsibility for their own relationship with God. Such ownership is critical for lifelong faith.

UNDERSTANDING

When young people feel understood, they are more open to understanding God. Meaning we need to know both the young person's world and help them grasp faith in their ways/language. It's about listening with empathy and honouring their questions—guiding rather than lecturing.

TRUST

Trust is the foundation for nurturing faith. It is what holds all the above qualities together. Trust is built through consistency, authenticity, and genuine care, allowing young people to feel safe, valued, and open to guidance. Without it, even the best advice or right theology will struggle to have any lasting impact.

IT IS OUR RELATIONSHIPS— NOT JUST SOUND THEOLOGY OR GREAT PROGRAMMES— THAT ULTIMATELY SHAPE OUR IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

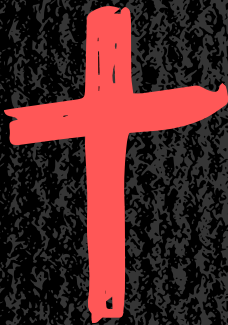
The A.B.O.U.T. framework defines what true relational ministry looks like, reminding us that it is our relationships—not just sound theology or great programmes—that ultimately shape our impact on young people. According to the *Your Story* research, A.B.O.U.T. relationships were a “safety net” during faith crises like doubt or personal tragedy. In contrast, where A.B.O.U.T. dynamics were absent, many youths felt judged, excluded, or powerless and often drifted away. Conditional love and broken trust left them searching for belonging elsewhere, weakening their faith foundation.

To summarise, for young people to grow and strengthen their faith, four key elements must work together. Belonging gives them a sense of being fully accepted as part of God’s family and faith community. Ownership helps them take personal responsibility for their relationship with God, making faith their own rather than inherited. Understanding bridges the gap between their world and the Gospel, as mentors listen with empathy and communicate faith in ways that connect. Underpinning it all is Trust, built through consistency, authenticity, and genuine care, creating the safe space where guidance and teaching can take root and flourish. 🌈





**A time to come,
hereafter, the Future**



**Training youth leaders and
youth ministry teams**



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**Kia
TO GROW
Tipu**sunz children's ministry training
MAGAZINE

ADVENT ADVENTURES

Christmas is the time that we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but this can be tricky when others around us aren't celebrating for the same reasons. How do we, as Christians, make time to slow down and reflect, during what is often called 'the silly season'? More importantly, how do we help our children slow down and shift their focus for a nano-second on anything besides presents and chocolates?

One way to do this is using an Advent Calendar. Advent is a time of preparation and expectation, a season of waiting, and starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (Sunday, 30 November 2025). The concept of an Advent Calendar shouldn't be a foreign one, after all even The Warehouse sells them—though the link with the birth of Jesus can be tenuous at best.

Advent calendars offer a fun and engaging way for children to count down (or up!) to Christmas, building excitement and anticipation. Why not try starting a new tradition with your family this year? One that can be revisited and revised from year to year.

In this edition of the Kia Tipu magazine, we will outline some fun and creative ideas for Advent Calendars, without blowing the budget or your stress levels.

LIZ EICHLER**SUNZ CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TEAM LEADER**

**CHECK OUT
OUR IDEAS!
PULL IT OUT! AND
PASS IT AROUND**

RECYCLED DIY ADVENT CALENDARS

Advent Calendars can come in a range of shapes and sizes. They don't have to be fancy but do need a bit of planning. Here's a simple idea that the whole family can help with.

Once you think of it, start collecting small containers. They don't have to be the same size. Put out a call to your friends and family for empty match boxes, paper cups, hummus containers, small yoghurt pottles, small jam jars.... You'll need 24 containers. Or instead of small containers you could use envelopes, small paper bags or boxes, or kete.

Once you've got them, you can leave them plain or get creative with some decorating. Paint them in Christmas colours—red & green, or purple & gold—or cover them in old Christmas wrapping paper. Number them 1-24.

Display them all at once or one at a time. Clear a shelf on a bookshelf for this purpose, or a windowsill, or dot

them around the house or have them in a shoe box.

Now, what to put inside them?

Ideas include filling them with small toys, treats, art supplies, or even crafting materials for daily activities.

Here are some great ideas from the Salvation Army you can print out:
www.salvationarmy.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/service_generosity_advent_calendar_0.pdf



I'm a great fan of the Jesus Storybook Bible:
pages.faithgateway.com/jesus-storybook-bible-advent-calendar-printable-free-registration/

For older children you could read a chapter of Luke each day.

**(OR BIG BOX)
A BASKET-FULL OF ADVENT**

Here are some other ideas for working your way through Advent and towards Christmas that will again help you to stop and reflect.

Pull out all the Christmas-themed children's books you have, then look for more from your local second-hand bookshop. Read one each day leading up to Christmas.

You could do the same with movies—make a list and have special family movie nights.

Reverse Advent Calendar—each day put something in the basket or box for a

foodbank.

Non-perishable items are best (can of corn, spaghetti, baked beans...) but don't forget some special Christmas treats as well.

Create a gratitude jar: Encourage children to write down things they are grateful for on small slips of paper and place them in the jar.



TINY HOUSE ADVENT CALENDAR

This resource includes a beautiful black and white template of 24 houses.

Simply print the template, cut, and colour each one, and then place a Christmas surprise inside before folding them up and gluing them securely.

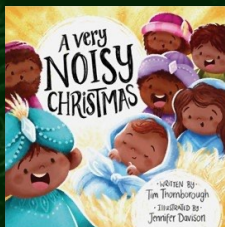
Put them on a table or a window ledge to create a Christmas village!

Read the Bible passages each day as a whānau together. Open the house and reveal what is inside (don't forget to put something in). Look out for the kiwi designs as you journey together through advent. Download the template at sunzbreakthrough.squarespace.com/resources/tinyhouseadvent



RESOURCES

AVAILABLE AT
[SUNZ.ORG.NZ](http://SUNZ.ORG.NZ/RESOURCES)
/RESOURCES



A VERY NOISY CHRISTMAS

How loud can you shout? How quietly can you whisper? Discover how quiet, and how noisy, the first Christmas was, and find out how the birth of Jesus is something worth shouting about. **\$10**



THE CHRISTMAS STORY BRICK BY BRICK

This faithful rhyming retelling of the Christmas story will help Lego-loving children to engage with the Christmas story afresh, highlighting the surprise and excitement of who Jesus is and why he came.

Fun rhymes make for a memorable and enjoyable read, while richly coloured, glossy photographs of real brick builds will inspire kids to get creative! (nb. Lego not included). **\$15**

LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES AND INSPIRATION?

Check out our **SUNZ Children and Families blogspot** and **Breakthrough websites**
childrenandfamiliesnz.blogspot.com | sunzbreakthrough.squarespace.com

WE NEED YOU!!

Are you passionate about children's ministry? Are you keen to see those in ministry encouraged, supported, and upskilled in their roles? Then we have the place for you! Scripture Union is looking to appoint someone in **Auckland AND** someone in **Christchurch** into the role of **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CONSULTANT**. That is two vacancies in two separate locations, and both are vital roles for our churches. For the job description and/or more information, please contact Liz Eichler, Children and Families Team Leader, liz.eichler@sunz.org.nz.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Churches and schools identify potential leaders and nominate them to attend an Exodus Prime camp.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Year 10 to 13 students who are identified by their churches or schools as having:

- significant leadership potential
- readiness to develop personally and as a Christian leader

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

\$250 covers all meals, accommodation and resources for the five day Exodus Prime camp, plus the training and resources for the 12- month mentorship programme.

EXODUS PRIME
EP
 TRANSFORMING YOUNG CHRISTIAN LEADERS

contact Neville Bartley on
neville.b@sunz.org.nz or 0272493728

EXODUS PRIME EP Building Christian Leaders OF THE FUTURE

Exodus (noun) *the act or an instance of going out.*

Prime (verb) *to prepare or make ready for a particular purpose or operation.*

Exodus Prime Young Leaders Programme started in January 2016, so our January 2026 camp will mark 10 years. EP runs on a four-year cycle with each year being its own stand-alone programme. Young leaders from Year 10 to Year 13 can participate by their church or school nominating them. EP starts with a five-day camp held in January and then each young leader meets with their church/school assigned mentor once a month for the rest of the year. Each mentoring session helps them grow as a Christian leader and in their own journey as a follower of Christ.

We continually refine the programme to equip young Christian leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to lead with faith, integrity, and impact. The structure of the EP camp is like SUNZ's other youth camps. Young people who

attend often comment they had fun, enjoyed meeting new people but that their brain hurts from all they have taken on board. When campers arrive, they are reminded that they have been nominated because their leadership potential has been recognised and valued. Throughout the camp, we encourage them to step into that potential and grow as confident young leaders. Each person is guided to develop Bible engagement material and supported in delivering this in daily small group sessions. There are a range of other activities that help them grow and develop their skills and their belief in themselves. The EP programme is designed for them to grow in faith and in their leadership abilities, and to help them discover and know that God believes in them and desires to use them and the leadership gifts they have.

Looking back on the 128 cohorts who have been part of EP to date, it is amazing to see what they are all up to. Some young people have grown on to be pastors, cross-cultural workers,

aspiring politicians, first responders, youth leaders, and volunteers in church ministries. While taking part in EP, many young leaders stepped into roles such as sports team captains, creative group leaders, and were even honoured with positions like prefect, head boy and head girl. These leadership roles were a clear reflection of the potential recognised in them when they were originally nominated. One of the most rewarding parts of being involved in the programme is to see the growth in the young leaders while on camp and then to see even more growth in those who continue with years two to four of the EP programme. Some EP'ers (as we call them) who have become youth pastors are sending their own church youth to participate in EP.

From 11-15 January 2026 we will have a wonderful group of young leaders joining us at Palm Grove Community Camp, Paraparaumu. Please pray for each of them that they will connect with God and that they will grow as a follower of Christ and as a leader.

If you know a young person from your church or school who would benefit from attending Exodus Prime, we invite you to nominate them. Speak to your youth ministry leader. Simply visit our website sunz.org.nz/leadership-development/exodus-prime/, click on the Nomination Form link and complete the registration form.

Or you may want to sponsor a young leader. EP costs \$250 for one young person to attend the January camp and be mentored into

leadership over the following 12 months. This is subsidised with the help of a generous fund for which we are praying for a new donor to support.

Please support these amazing young leaders to make an impact in our world.

EP'ers 2016 – 2025

Names in bold have completed the full 4-year EP mentoring programme.

Abishkar · AJ · **Alyssa** · Amalia · Amelie · Andre · Anna · Anne · Annie · Arabella · Arthur · **Asher** · Ayla · Bailey · **Bee** · Ben · Berto · Bethany · Bradley · Breanna · Briar · Byron · Caitlin-Rose · Caleb · Carla · Caylin · Chara · Charlotte · Cheron · Cheyenne · Chirlene · Daniel · Delaney · Dominik · Elizabeth · Ella · Elliott · Emily · Emy · Ethan · Eve · Ewan · Fiona · Forde · **George** · Grace · **Grace** · Heamani · **Holly** · Ike · Isabella · Isabelle · Itinibina · Jack · Jacob · Jakob · Jasmine · Jasper · Jaxon · Jeremy · Jessica · Jessie · Jo · **Jordan** · Jos · Josiah · Joy · Kaitlin · Kara · Katie · Kaylee · Kaysha · Keelan · Kelsey · Laura · Lauren · Lexi · Liam · Luca · Luke · Matthew · Max · Meli · Mia · Michael · Molly · Monica · Naomi · **Natasha** · Nathan · Ollie · Paul · Peter · Portia · Querida · Rachel · Rahul · Rebekah · Regan · Robert · Sam · Samuel · Sarah · Sarah-Kate · Sean · Sebastian · Shannon · Sophia · Steven · Tatjana · **Thomas** · Thomas · Timothy · Tobi · Vahri · Zeke 🏹



WHAT IS



T H E N E X T D A Y

Āpōpō is an awareness workshop for teenagers, their teachers, friends and whānau—to learn effective ‘first responder’ tools to recognise warning signs and the need for early intervention to support mental health and personal wellbeing.

We introduce the T.A.L.K. method:

T - tell someone.

A - ask me.

L - listen.

K -keep safe.

The workshops are led by trained facilitators and advocates.

**CAN YOU SUPPORT
OUR ĀPŌPŌ MINISTRY?
YOUR DONATION WILL HELP
WITH TRAVEL COSTS
AND RESOURCING.**



sunz.org.nz/āpōpō/



WHAT IS



Mental Health First Aid Aotearoa

Mental Health First Aid Aotearoa is an evidence-based, accredited two-day training programme that trains 'first responders' to provide initial support to adults experiencing mental health challenges.

SUNZ have four accredited MHFA facilitators who are in demand to run programmes for youth leaders, church groups, Bible college groups, teachers, and community groups.

CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM AS THEY PARTNER WITH CHURCHES AND TRAIN LEADERSHIP TEAMS IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

A \$600 donation can get a two-day workshop started.



Email piper.clare@sunz.org.nz for more information. Or visit sunz.org.nz/mental-health-first-aid-aotearoa/



LIGHT for the path

SAPATI TIMA

| SUNZ Youth Consultant, Auckland

The theme for Samoan Language Week (31 May - 6 June) was “*Ia malu lou sā, Folau i lagimā*” (“A well-grounded self, is a successful self”). It draws on the image of a traditional Samoan sailing *va’a* (vessel). A successful voyage demanded meticulous craftsmanship to ensure watertight construction and knowledge of celestial navigation. To face the vast unpredictable seas, a vessel must be built with extreme care and precision. Similarly, people who approach life with careful preparation and intention are well fortified, much like a well-built *va’a*. And having that firm foundation will set a person up to succeed in their endeavours.

Jesus teaches the importance of foundation in Matthew 7:24: “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” This reminds us that what is often unseen—the solid foundation, is what enables us to stand firm when challenges arise. As followers of Christ, true strength comes from being deeply rooted in our relationship with Him.

Charles Spurgeon said, “The foundation of our hope is not in ourselves, but in the finished work of Christ.” When we are well-grounded in Jesus, we are like

a vessel built to endure—steady, and ready to serve God well. But to remain anchored in Christ, we must persistently strengthen our faith through a prayerful life and meditating on His Word daily.

Our Christian faith is layered like a 3-storey building. For the Body of Christ to strive, our personal relationship with God and our home ministry must stand strong. Why? Because the enemy will attack

us consistently inside our ‘everyday’ rather than just Sunday mornings. It’s strategic. If both the 1st and 2nd storeys are weakened, then the 3rd storey/ church ministry will collapse.

While trials and hardships are inevitable, those whose lives are built on the rock, the firm foundation shall overcome. Let us stand strong at each storey, and continue being witnesses for Him with our words, our actions and our song, *Jesus is the Rock and He rolls my blues away...*

Manuia. 🏳️





MEET Sapati

*Kō Korokota te maunga o tōku ngākau
Nō te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa ahau
Kō Tima te iwi
Kō Sapati tōku ingoa*

Talofa lava! I am Sapati Tima. My villages are Magiagi and Ulutogia. My beautiful ezer (wife) Meiolandre hails from Vaiala, Vatia and Falelatai. We have three children whom we treasure although they keep teaching us daily about patience.

Being one of ten children, family is everything. My parents were early migrants from Samoa who arrived in New Zealand in the 1960s. They each held two-to-three jobs at various stages of my upbringing to make ends meet. I may not have grown up in a wealthy household, but my home was always rich in two things—God and love.

My formative journey in ministry began 20 years ago as a minister-in-training; a graduate from Malua Theological College and University of Auckland, and a master's degree in theology. Most of what I know about faith has been learned in the real world. And while I have experienced and seen much, I have discovered that the heart of it all is



simple—to love God, love people, and walk humbly in His Grace.

I was previously the Chaplain of Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat Centre and served as the Reverend Minister of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (EFKS) in Mangere. Now, I have the privilege of being a part of SUNZ as the Auckland Youth Consultant. All praises and glory to God for entrusting me with these opportunities.

I am passionate about sharing the Gospel—whether that is encouraging someone over lunch, guiding young people, walking alongside others on their spiritual journey, or creating messages that bring Scripture to life.

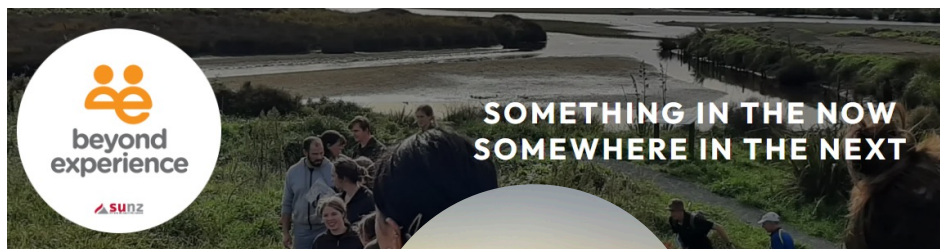
Outside of ministry, I enjoy going for walks, chasing my children around the park, watching F1, board games, and trying to keep healthy.

So, what is next? For me, it is about staying faithful with what God has placed in my hands—loving my family well, serving my community, and stepping forward into the opportunities He opens, one day at a time.

*Psalm 150:6 “Let everything that
breathes praise the Lord!”* ▲

OUT & ABOUT

SAVE THE DATES:
2-23 NOVEMBER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS EVENTS
Visit sunz.org.nz/sunz-supporters-event/
for more information and to RSVP



In this issue, Out & About catches up with a special group of volunteers. These young people are Tuarua (second year) in our Beyond Experience Leadership Development programme. As part of their learning, they have chosen projects that will feed back into SUNZ's ministries... SOMETHING IN THE NOW...



best to use them in a SUNZ context. **COLE MCCONNELL** is working with Donna Beech, our Camps Admin, to automate and streamline the way that camp registration data is processed. **HANNAH**



ANNA BROWN has been working on the design and illustrations for camper booklets for our winter, spring and summer camping seasons. **ARIA TROUGHTON** is developing a sustainability checklist for team leaders to use across all camps. **CHARLOTTE**

FENTON is writing an article exploring the intersection between Te Ao Māori and faith. **CHELSEA GIDDINGS** is preparing to team lead on *Canterbury Wind n Water* in January. **CHRISTINA MCLACHLAN** is in the process of completing 3 NZOIA (outdoor) qualifications and is exploring how

MORGAN is designing an interactive map for use on camps based at our SU Adventure Lodge and will be completing an NZOIA qualification. **JESSE ELIAS** was co-team leading and creating guidelines around the use and practice of tikanga on *Pōnui Spring Adventure*. **LILLY MCLEAN** is creating a tactile resource for fostering conversation on camps. **RAFE PERSSON** is developing plant ID cards for use on camps that will identify medicinal uses. **SIENNA INGLIS** was part of the planning and leadership team for *Going Deeper* camp in September.

Our BE Programme is managed by **Beth Coates** and **Hilary Hague**. Pray for them, and for our young people as they further develop their leadership skills for SOMEWHERE IN THE NEXT... sunz.org.nz/leadership-development/beyond-experience/



SUNZ also publish Prayer Adventure bi-monthly prayer points, available on our website sunz.org.nz/prayer-adventure/

SEPTEMBER HEPETEMA

Thanks to all who joined our **online AGM** on 9 Sept. We voted in Meredith Mackenzie as Board Chair, and sincerely thanked Neil Walbran for his 9 years of chairing the SUNZ Board.

Hilary Hague, Beth Coates, Hana Leofo, Caitlin Janes at a **Beyond Experience (BE) strategy and prayer meeting** in Wellington 16-17 Sept.

We are grateful to all who donated to our **leadership training appeal**.

OCTOBER OKETOPA

We had 175 campers, and 75 leaders & helpers enjoy our **spring camps**. Bible engagement (at the youth camps) was based on building faith, like the 3-storey building image that Sapati Tima wrote about on page 24: foundation, purpose, friendship, building trust and church as community.

SUNZ Youth Team hui 13-15 Oct.

National Leadership Team (NLT) meet in Wellington 21-22 Oct.

NOVEMBER NOEMA

Our **BE 2025 programme concludes**. Pray for lifelong faith and leadership for these 33 young people. We encourage them to sign on for the second year which involves a ministry project.

SUNZ are hosting seven **Supporters Events** from 2-23 Nov. Visit sunz.org.nz/sunz-supporters-event/ for the locations and details. We'd love to see you at one of these events:

- 2 Nov Wellington
- 4 Nov Hamilton
- 11 Nov Dunedin
- 12 Nov Gore and Invercargill
- 18 Nov Auckland
- 23 Nov Christchurch

SU Global Week of Prayer is on 3-8 Nov. Themed On Christ the solid rock I stand; readings from 1 Peter. Follow the programme on our Prayer Adventure or scriptureunion.global/what-we-do/pray/

SUNZ Board meet in Wellington 28-29 Nov.

DECEMBER TĪHEMA

Gather North 6-7 Dec, Pōnui Island.

E3 (36 expeditioners plus leaders) are packed and away 9-20 Dec.

JANUARY HĀNUERE

Summer Camps are GO!
sunz.org.nz/all-camps/

- 4-8 Jan Aspire
- 5-9 Jan Senior Surfari & Gnarly Groms
- 6-12 Jan Pōnui Junior
- 11-15 Jan Exodus Prime
- 11-16 Jan Te Anau Extend
- 13-20 Jan Pōnui Senior
- 18-23 Jan Te Anau Wind n Water & Canterbury Wind n Water
- 21-25 Jan Summer Supreme

Your legacy could change lives...

funds provides inspires ensures



" *We are convinced that it is worth including SUNZ in our wills because we expect it to go on being blessed by God and being a blessing to the whole church in New Zealand. We are confident in the wise stewardship of resources within SUNZ, glad to see prudence in the expenditure of funds, sowing the seed of gift income to produce a great harvest."*

—Humphrey & Lois Babbage
SUNZ supporters

By leaving a gift to Scripture Union New Zealand, you help ensure ministries continue sharing God's Good News with children, young people, and families for generations. Even 1% of your estate can make a life-changing impact.



Get your Legacy Guide at sunz.org.nz/legacy, email legacy@sunz.org.nz, or call **0508 423 836**.

Support Our Youth

Our vision is to see children and young people transformed by Jesus! We need your help to keep making a difference in young lives!

\$40 to help fund Āpōpō
\$100 to sponsor a youth ministry worker
\$250 to support a young person for Exodus Prime

Together, we can transform lives—one young person at a time.

ways to give



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SUMMER


TWENTY
25
26
**YOUTH
CAMPS**

REGISTER NOW!



sunz.org.nz



Christmas Cards

pack of 5 cards and envelopes


\$10.00



Like or Follow

What every teenager needs to decide about Jesus.

Find out why Jesus reframes your world with hope! This is a thought-provoking book aimed at teenagers new to our Christian faith. It's an excellent resource for youth leaders, with links to 5-min videos and framework for discussion.

\$8.00



Wow! Christmas

creatively explore stories in the Bible

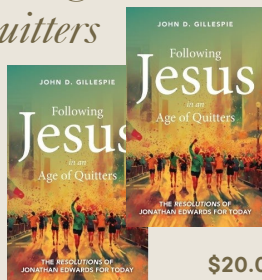
Explore six aspects about the birth of Jesus through activities, prayer, craft, acting, reflection, discussion and praise. Use at home and as a resource for intergenerational services.

\$25.00



SUNZ.ORG.NZ/RESOURCES

Following Jesus In An Age Of Quitters



\$20.00

In 1722, 18-year-old Jonathan Edwards began writing 70 resolutions, personal statements of intent to which he resolved to hold himself accountable. This book is an examination of these resolutions in the light of Scripture and how we can apply them to our lives today.

The Bible Is Funny Card Game



A box of 200 cards with situations and Bible verses to match. This is a fun card game for ages 12+, providing a creative way to engage with Biblical narratives.

\$48.00



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sunz.org.nz/adventure-magazine/

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**We support churches to help children
and young people discover Jesus
and become lifelong disciples
who serve the world around them.**



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He rama tāu kupu ki ōku waewae | Your word is a lamp to my feet. Psalm 119:105

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