

# Exploring the Role of the Youth and Its Impact in Church Activities

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**Abstract**— The researcher's motivation for writing this paper stemmed from her observation of the current state of youth involvement in the church. Recognizing the need for action, they aim to encourage greater participation among young members to foster more active engagement within the church community. The researcher employed a descriptive-qualitative study design. The respondents were 8 youths and 8 parents. The researcher designed the interview guide questionnaire, had experts validate and approve it, and conducted face-to-face interviews using gadgets to record the interviewee's responses. This study aimed to describe the youth's role and impact in their local church in Masiag Bagumbayan Sultan Kudarat. The church community views youth's roles in Our Lady of Guadalupe Masiag Parish as multifaceted. They see themselves as servers, attending to the needs of others and the Church community; helpers, providing assistance and support; role models, embodying the values and principles of their faith; supporters, offering encouragement and assistance; teachers, sharing their knowledge and understanding of faith; servants, serving others; and participants, engaging in various Church activities. Furthermore, the impact of youth involvement in the church influences both the youth themselves and the church community, contributing to their empowerment and engagement. The researcher acknowledged the significant role and impact of youth in the church. While many youths are actively involved in both internal and external church activities, a limited number of members participate in various ministries and attend regularly. The results of this study suggest the following recommendations, utilizing the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) framework: The study recommends empowering the youth through a) youth leadership development and b) community service programs.

**Keywords**— Appreciative: Inquiry (AI): Church: Empowerment: Participation: Youth.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Youth is the Now of God but we cannot just say that “young people are the future of our world”, says Pope Francis. Their involvement is critical to the church's growth and sustainability. As the next generation of leaders, youth bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the table, challenging the church to evolve and adapt to changing times. Additionally, youth are essential to ensuring the church's continuity and relevance in the years to come. By engaging and investing in youth, the church can help to ensure that its message and mission continue to resonate with future generations (Williams, 2019).

The church provides numerous opportunities for youth to serve and lead, allowing them to develop their skills and grow in their faith. These opportunities can include serving in the worship team, leading small groups, volunteering in outreach

programs, and participating in mission trips. By providing these opportunities, the church empowers youth to take ownership of their faith and become active participants in the church's mission. This not only prepares them for future leadership roles but also allows them to contribute to the church's growth and impact (Musonda, 2023).

The impact of youth on church culture and growth cannot be overstated. Young people bring energy, enthusiasm, and a fresh perspective to the church, challenging traditional modes of thinking and inspiring innovation. They also have a unique ability to connect with their peers and invite them into the church community, expanding the church's reach and influence. By investing in youth and empowering them to lead, the church can create a culture of growth and vibrancy that will connect with them. Ultimately, the church's success in fulfilling its mission depends on its ability to engage and empower youth, preparing them to become the next generation of leaders and ambassadors for Christ (Turpin, 2023).

The researcher's motivation for writing this paper stems from a recognition of the current situation and participation of youth within the Church. There exists a pressing need to enhance their involvement and engagement in Church activities. Inspired by Pope Francis's assertion that "Youth is the Now of the God," the researcher aims to explore how the youth can be nurtured to become the future of our Church. This inquiry seeks to understand the challenges facing youth in their faith journey and to identify ways to support them effectively. Additionally, the researcher is driven by a desire to promote youth empowerment, intellectual growth, and positive social impact. By offering young people a platform to express themselves and address pertinent issues, particularly in the context of contemporary global challenges, the aim is to inspire them to actively shape their futures and contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

The researcher identifies several challenges regarding youth participation in the Church. One significant issue is the multitude of demands on young people's time. Many youths prioritize familial obligations, academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, and social commitments, which can limit their availability for church involvement. Additionally, some lack interest in attending church altogether. The prevalence of digital technology and social media further complicates matters, as it has transformed how young individuals engage with the world. Many prefer the comfort of

their homes, where they can freely pursue their interests, over attending church services. While some may participate in church activities, such as youth camps, it is often for entertainment purposes rather than understanding the significance of such gatherings.

The current situation in Masiag reflects a community characterized by simplicity and strong interpersonal connections, as residents lead modest lives and enjoy close-knit relationships with one another. However, despite this sense of familiarity and camaraderie, challenges persist, particularly in light of the pervasive influence of the digital age. This impact is particularly pronounced among the younger generation, who often grapple with the negative effects of technology, such as social media addiction and social withdrawal.

Furthermore, economic difficulties remain a pressing issue for many residents, exacerbated by limited educational opportunities and employment prospects. This struggle is particularly acute in rural areas like Masiag, where access to stable employment is scarce, leading many to rely on agriculture as their primary source of income. Thus, while the community thrives on its close bonds and simple lifestyle, it continues to face significant obstacles, underscoring the need for targeted support and intervention.

*1.1 Research Questions (RQ)*

This study aims to determine the role and impact of the youth in Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Masiag, Bagumbayan Sultan Kudarat. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following:

1. How do youth respondents view their roles in the church?
2. How do parents and youth respondents view the impact of the youth’s contribution and engagement to the church?
3. What programs can be suggested to increase the engagement of the youths in the local church?

**II. METHODOLOGY**

The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative study design. The respondents were 8 youths and 8 parents, in terms of membership of the youth in different ministries 3 respondents say that they belong in the Church ministries which are the altar server ministry, lector commentator ministry, and youth ministry while 5 do not belong which shows that most of the respondents do not belong to any membership in the Church. The frequency of participation of the respondents in the Church out of 8 youths one of them answered always, 2 at often, and 5 answered sometimes. The interview guide questionnaire was designed by the researcher, and it was approved by experts and subjected to face-to-face interviews and using gadgets to record the interviewee’s responses. This study aimed to describe the youth’s role and impact in their local Church in Masiag Bagumbayan Sultan Kudarat.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the findings of the study.

RQ 1: How do youth respondents view their roles in the church?

Table 1 describes how youths view their role in the Church as servers serving the needs of others and the needs of the Church community, helpers aiding and supporting others, and,

in the Church, role models embodying the values and principles of their faith, supporters offering encouragement and assistance, teacher sharing their knowledge and understanding of faith, servants serving others and participants engaging in various Church activities.

TABLE 1. Youths’ roles in the Church

Respondents	Code	Theme
1	“Role ko is mag serve kay God kag mag serve sa Simbahan or katawhan. Kag kung misa like kasal or bunyag.”	Server
2	“Mag help sa Simbahan at makisali sa mga activities at kung sponsorship naga sama kami sa president mag tanim bulak.”	Helper
3	“Magtulong sa mga tao basi sa aking natutunan.”	Helper
4	“Role ko para sa iban is mag encourage na mag skwela ang mga kabataan.”	Role Model
5	“Bilang isang Youth mag support kung ano ang program ng Simbahan.”	Supporter
6	“Tudluan ang mga bata about sa role sa Simbahan kag sang Youth.”	Teacher
7	“Servant of God and servant people.”	Servant
8	“Ang akon role ay mag participate kung ano man ang ara sa Simbahan.”	Participant

The role of youth in the Church is multifaceted, encompassing various responsibilities, opportunities, and contributions to the overall mission and vitality of the faith community. Youth are often regarded as the future leaders of the Church. As such, they are encouraged to develop their leadership skills, spiritual maturity, and commitment to the Christian faith. They may be mentored by older members of the congregation and given opportunities to assume leadership roles within youth ministries and other areas of church life (Paul, 2020). Youth are integral members of the church community and are encouraged to actively participate in worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and other spiritual activities. Their presence and involvement enrich the worship experience and contribute to the sense of unity and diversity within the congregation (Lynchburg, 2022) Mission and Outreach, Youth play a vital role in the Church’s mission to share the Gospel and serve others. They may participate in local outreach efforts, volunteer for community service projects, engage in evangelism and discipleship, and support global mission initiatives through fundraising, awareness-building, and short-term mission trips (Lynchburg, 2013). The role of youth in the Church is dynamic and multifaceted, encompassing spiritual growth, leadership development, mission and outreach, community building, and cultural engagement. As valuable members of the faith community, youth contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the Church and play a significant role in advancing God’s kingdom on earth.

RQ 2: How do parents and youth respondents view the impact of the youth’s contribution and engagement with the church?

Table 2 presents how parents view the influence of the youth’s involvement in the church as cooperative members of the church, teachers to the children, motivators within the church community, collaborative efforts within the church, encouragers, and facilitators such as those who plan and coordinate events.

TABLE 2. Parents' Perceptions of the impact of the youth's Contributions to the church

Respondents	Code	Theme
1	"Kung kinahanglan sang Simbahan naga cooperate sila kung may seminar amo man gyapon."	Cooperative
2	"Kung may ara sang Flores de Mayo kag bulig sa bata na mag lakat sa Simbahan hagiton mag simba."	Motivator
3	"Mag bulig tudlo sa mga bata like Flores de mayo mag assist sa first com. Naga tudlo sa mga sang prayer. Naga Sali sa choir. Sacristan mag upod kay father pag may area kag naga bulig. Naga pang limpyo sa sulod sang Simbahan."	Teacher
4	"Kung mag amot2 para sa tanan nga obligation sa Simbahan. Pang limpyo sa Simbahan mang hilamon."	Collaborator
5	"Kung may ara sang Flores de Mayo. Bulig sa bata na mag lakat sa Simbahan hagiton mag simba."	Encourager
6	"Naga bulig arrange sa sulod Simbahan. Hilikutons a sulod sang simbahan sila ang nag obra. Mas active sila dati unlike subong kag kung tawgon sila amo lang pag kadto nila more on si Nanay Choly naga himo sang orobrahon nila."	Collaborator
7	"If may fiesta sila ang naga handle. Sponsorship sa Simbahan nag bulig sila. Active man ang mga Youth naga Sali ang iban sa Lectors Commentator Ministry (LCM)."	Facilitator Lector Commentator
8	"Naga bulig sa hilikuton sa Simbahan like altar server, pang limpyo sa Simbahan, pang encourage sa ibang youth na mag sulod/participate sa Simbahan. Sa mga activities naga bulig man like sa fiesta kag kung ano man ang activities sa simbahan, bulig sa komunidad pang hatag sang relief goods distribute sa Sitio May ara kami sang Alay kapwa."	Collaborator

Youth play a crucial role in supporting and contributing to the life of the Church in various ways. Here are several ways in which youth help the Church: Leadership Development, Youth are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills by serving in leadership roles within youth ministries or participating in church committees and decision-making processes. They may also serve as mentors to younger children or peers within the congregation (Hyungsik, 2010). Worship Involvement, Youth contribute to the worship experience by participating in music ministries, serving as nights of the altar and lectures, leading prayers, or scripture readings during services, or assisting with audiovisual technology (Hall, 2020). Youth provide support and encouragement to one another and to other members of the congregation. They build relationships, offer friendship, and provide emotional and spiritual support during times of difficulty or challenge (Michaelson et al, 2015) Youth play an active and essential role in helping the Church fulfill its mission of worship, discipleship, service, and outreach in the world. Their energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to serve contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the Church community.

TABLE 3. Parents' perception of the impact of the youth's engagement in the Church

Respondents	Code	Theme
1	"Naging good example sila sa parte sa Pag seminar"	Model
2	"Mga active kung mag participate sa Simbahan."	Active Participant
3	"Dako gid ang bulig nila."	Big impact
4	"Nakabubuti na ara sila kay naka timbang bulig sa Simbahan."	Helpful
5	"Mga active kung mag participate sa Simbahan. Maayo man ang komunidad kay ara sila."	Model
6	"Nami gid kay kung may misa ara sila ga obligar sila sang ila obligation hindi mag nami ang Simbahan kung wala ang mga youth. Nami tan awon nga may naga bulig kay Father pero pare pareho lang ang makita nga nag bulig."	Model
7	"Dako ang epekto nila sa Simbahan kay nag bulig sila."	Big impact
8	"Nami gid kay ara sila nga naga serbisyo naga bulig kay Father."	Server

Table 3 presents, parents' perceptions of the impact of youth engagement in the Church as role models within the Church

community, actively engaged members of the Church, helpful because of their willingness to contribute to the needs of the Church, significant impact within the Church community, and youth as servants of their faith.

The impact of youth involvement in the Church is profound and far-reaching, influencing both the youth themselves and the broader church community. Here are several key aspects of the impact of youth engagement in the Church: Leadership Development, Involvement in youth ministries, and leadership roles provide young people with opportunities to develop their leadership skills, character, and spiritual maturity. As they take on responsibilities and serve in various capacities, they gain confidence, grow in their faith, and prepare to become future leaders within the Church and society (Hyungsik, 2010) Cultural Relevance and youth involvement help the Church stay culturally relevant and responsive to the changing needs and interests of younger generations. Their insights into contemporary culture, social issues, and technology can inform the Church's ministries, outreach efforts, and approaches to worship and discipleship (Schafer, 2020) The impact of youth involvement in the Church is multifaceted, encompassing spiritual, relational, and missional dimensions that contribute to the growth, vitality, and relevance of the Church both now and in the future. By empowering and equipping young people to live out their faith authentically and passionately, the Church can experience transformative impact within its walls and in the wider world.

Table 4 presents, Youth's perceptions of the impact of their contributions to the church as a teacher sharing their knowledge, motivators inspiring their peers to participate in Church activities, role models, and sharers of their faith experiences while others have no significant impact.

The impact of youth being involved in the Church is significant and multifaceted, influencing both the youth themselves and the broader church community. Here are several ways in which youth involvement can have a positive impact: Leadership Development and involvement in church activities provide opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, character, and spiritual maturity. They learn to take initiative, collaborate with others, and take responsibility for serving and leading in various capacities (Hyungsik, 2010). The impact of youth involvement in the Church is profound, shaping the present and future of the faith community and contributing to

its vibrancy, relevance, and effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. By empowering and engaging young people, the Church can harness their passion, talents, and energy to advance God's kingdom and make a positive difference in the world.

TABLE 4. Youth's perceptions of the impact of their contributions to the church

Respondents	Code	Theme
1	"Naka bulig ako sa ibang bata kag sa mga friends like turuan sila about kay God naga encourage ng ibang kabataan na mag Simba."	Teacher and Motivator
2	"Naka tulong ako sa Simbahan sa pag tudlo sa mga kabataan sang mga mayad nga butang."	Teacher
3	"Maka share sang mga mabuot nga gin bulig sang Ginoo sa aton."	Model
4	"Mag bulig encourage sa mga kabataan na mag skwela."	Motivator
5	"Dagdag kaalaman sa ibang bata kasi minsan kailangan mo din maki join sa iba."	Teacher
6	"Na adopt ko ang mga tudlo sa Simbahan kag na share ko man sa iban nga tao. Ginayaya ko ang mga bata na mag join sa iban nga kabataan."	Motivator
7	"May mabuligan hindi lang para sa akon sa iban man nga tao kung ano ang nabal an ko gina share ko sa iba. Huwaran sa ibang bata para makita sang iban na parent para man ipa sulod ang ila nga bata sa mga ministry. Bulig kay Father at mag serve."	Sharer
8	"Wala kaayo ni epekto sa akon kay wala ko kaayo naga pamati active lang ko kung may ara sang activities sa Simbahan kay para lang sa lingaw2."	No impact

TABLE 5. Youth's perception of the impact of their engagement in the Church

Respondents	Code	Theme
1	"Naka tulong ako sa ibang bata lalo na sa kapwa ko nga mga Youth"	Collaborator
2	"Naka bulig man ko sa Simbahan bisan ginagmay lang pamaagi sa pag participate kung ano man buluhaton sa Simbahan."	Participator
3	"Naka bulig ini kay biskan papaano naka hikayat ako sang mga bata nga mag participate man sa Simbahan."	Motivator
4	"Naka bulig ini kay biskan amo lang ko sini may ara man japon ko nga mga bata ng ana encourage nga mag skwela."	Motivator
5	"Dagdag kaalaman sa ibang bata kasi minsan kailangan mo din maki join sa iba."	Teacher
6	"Na adopt ko ang mga tudlo sa Simbahan kag na share ko man sa iban nga tao. Ginayaya ko ang mga bata na mag join sa iban nga kabataan."	Motivator
7	"Bilang servant of God kag servant of people naka bulig ang akon role sa pag encourage sang mga katawhan lalo na ang mga kapwa ko nga mga youth."	Motivator
8	"Wala kaayo ko sang may nabuligan kay ako mismo hindi man active sa Simbahan."	Not active

Table 5 presents, youths' perception of the impact of their engagement in the Church as collaborators working with others, participators through attending Church activities, motivators encouraging others to get involved in the Church, and

supporters by offering assistance while others not actively engaged in the Church community.

The youth's perception of the impact of their engagement in the Church encompasses a range of experiences and perspectives. For some, it may signify a profound sense of belonging and spiritual growth, providing them with a supportive community and opportunities for personal development. Others may view their involvement as a chance to contribute meaningfully, whether through collaborative efforts, active participation in Church activities, encouragement of others to get involved, or offering support to those facing challenges. Ultimately, their perception reflects the significance of their role within the Church community and the various ways in which their engagement contributes to its vitality and mission (Hanna, 2020). Youth can play various roles in helping the Church thrive and fulfill its mission. Here are some different roles youth can have in assisting the Church: Youth Group Leaders, Youth can take on leadership roles within youth ministries, organizing events, leading Bible studies, and mentoring younger members of the youth group (Elias, 2020) Service Volunteers, Youth can volunteer their time and talents to serve the church community and those in need. This could involve participating in service projects, volunteering at community outreach events, or assisting with church maintenance and upkeep (Cowe et al, 2009).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

RQ 3. What programs can be suggested to increase the engagement of the youths in the local church?

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher proposed the Youth Leadership Development Program for the youth to engage in the Church. But leadership training goes beyond just workshops and seminars; it's about hands-on experience and real-world application. Along with this, is the Community Service Program, which goes beyond just providing entertainment but is also rooted in a desire to share the love of Christ in tangible ways. Through service projects and outreach initiatives, the youth seek to meet the practical needs of the community, demonstrating God's love in action and making a positive impact on the lives of those around them.

To sustain the proposed program the researcher suggested Empower Youth through Appreciative Inquiry (AI) programs aim to foster positive youth development by leveraging the principles of AI. Using the AI Framework, the researcher seeks to identify strengths, and opportunities within the Church communities for sustainability to empower youth to enhance their participation in Church activities.

Appreciative Inquiry is a positive approach to leadership development and organizational change. The method is used to boost innovation among organizations. An organization might apply appreciative inquiry to best practices, strategic planning, and organizational culture, and to increase the momentum of initiatives (Cooperrider et al, 1987).

Title: Empowering Youth through AI

Program Objectives:

To introduce participants to the principles and practices of Appreciative Inquiry.

To help participants recognize their strengths and talents.



To encourage participants to identify and appreciate their roles in the Church.

To empower participants to initiate positive changes in the Church.

Here are the Phases used in the AI Framework:

*Discovery Phase*

The facilitator will conduct interviews, or surveys with youth participants, program staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders. Ask open-ended questions focusing on positive experiences, successes, strengths, and what the participants value most about the program. Here are the possible questions:

Can you share a memorable experience you've had in the youth program?

What aspects of the program do you find most beneficial or enjoyable?

What do you appreciate most about the program and its activities?

*Dream Phase*

This is based on the insights gathered in the Discovery.

Encourage participants to envision the ideal future of the youth program.

Facilitate brainstorming sessions or workshops where participants can share their aspirations and ideas for improvement.

Encourage creativity and innovation in imagining possibilities for the program's growth and impact.

Ask questions such as:

What would the youth program look like if it exceeded all expectations?

What new activities or initiatives would you like to see implemented in the program?

How can the program better serve the needs and interests of youth participants?

*Design Phase*

Facilitate collaborative discussions to prioritize ideas and develop a plan for implementing changes or improvements. Assign responsibilities and establish timelines for implementing the proposed initiatives

*Destiny Phase*

Implement the strategies and initiatives developed in the Design Phase. Monitor progress and evaluate the impact of changes on the youth program. Celebrate successes and milestones achieved along the way. Continuously revisit and adapt the program based on feedback and evolving needs.

*Resource Persons*

They play a critical role in facilitating a positive, inclusive, and transformative experience for participants. Their expertise, facilitation skills, objectivity, guidance, and support are essential for creating a conducive environment where individuals can collaborate, innovate, and co-create positive change.

*Budgeting*

Allocate Resources and determine how financial resources will be allocated across different activities and projects within the Youth Program.

**Program Plan Using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Framework**

Key Result	Discovery	Dream	Design	Destiny	Persons	Budget
Youth Leadership Development Program	Aims to empower young individuals with essential leadership skills, foster their personal growth, and equip them with tools to make a positive impact in their communities.	A church where youth are actively engaged in all aspects of church life, from worship services and fellowship events to service projects and leadership roles.	Participants would collaborate to create concrete plans and strategies based on the vision developed.  Conduct Leadership Retreats which include workshops, outdoor activities, and networking opportunities.  Leadership Reflection Journaling encourages them to reflect on their experiences, challenges, successes, and lessons learned	To be equipped with the skills, confidence, and sense of purpose.  Once a Month  Community Engagement Projects where participants work in teams to plan, execute, and evaluate their projects under the guidance of mentors.	Youth Group  Parish Priest  Pastoral Coordinator	Stipend for speaker  Meals per pax  Materials
Community Service Programs	To provide diverse and impactful volunteer and community service programs that engage individuals in addressing social needs, fostering community connections, and promoting positive social change.	Where every individual is recognized and valued for their unique contributions, where compassion flows freely, and where communities thrive in harmony	With our strengths and resources in mind, we gather in collaborative design sessions to co-create innovative solutions that address the needs and aspirations of our community.  To have a Community Service Projects involves volunteering at local charities, organizing fundraisers, and outreach.	Through strategic partnerships, resource mobilization initiatives, and innovative funding models, we expand the reach and scope of our programs, amplifying their impact and effectiveness.  Once a month  Evaluation Session where youth participants generate ideas for service projects.	Youth Group  Parish Priest  Pastoral Coordinator	Stipend for speaker  Meals per pax  Materials

V. CONCLUSION

The roles of youth in Our Lady of Guadalupe Masiag Parish are multifaceted, as they perceive themselves as servers, attending to the needs of others and the Church community; helpers, providing assistance and support; role models, embodying the values and principles of their faith; supporters, offering encouragement and assistance; teachers, sharing their knowledge and understanding of faith; servants, serving others; and participants, engaging in various Church activities. Consequently, the researcher concludes that while most youths play significant roles both within and outside of Church activities, there exists a limited number of members involved in various ministries and with consistent attendance.

Furthermore, the impact of youth involvement in the Church influences both the youth themselves and the church community, contributing to the empowerment and engagement of young people. Youths in the Church exert a transformative influence on both individuals and the broader community. Through teaching, sharing positive aspects of the Church, and promoting education, youth play a pivotal role in nurturing a supportive and engaged environment. By imparting their knowledge and encouraging participation, they serve as exemplary figures, inspiring others to actively engage in Church activities. This active involvement not only fulfills their responsibilities within the Church but also contributes to the greater good by serving and empowering the community. Youth participation in the Church catalyzes personal growth, fosters community development, and empowers young individuals.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you think is your role in the Church?
2. What do you think is the impact of the youth's contributions to the Church?
3. What do you think is the impact of the youth's engagement in the Church?
4. What do you think is the impact of your contribution to the Church?
5. What do you think is the impact of your engagement to the Church?

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