

May 28, 2020

# S T E P B Y S T E P ADVANCE

Tasmanian  
**BAPTISTS**



## Woohoo! Let's Celebrate our Youth and Young Adults

- **READ** Youth Leadership Development Coordinator Jenna Blackwell's overview
- **COLLABORATE** with others around the state in a "Generations" video
- **CHECK-OUT** how COVID-19 has affected youth groups

You will be blessed to know our youth are being well cared for.  
Blessings!

Jenny

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**Jenny Baxter**

Tasmanian Baptists Communications Manager | State Director, Tasmanian Baptist Women

[jenny@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenny@tasbaptists.org.au) | 0401 652 566

# Tasmanian Baptist Youth Ministries

state-wide youth:

## What's Going on for Youth and Young Adults?

Jenna Blackwell, our Youth Leadership Development Coordinator, describes the landscape for Baptist youth around the state during this COVID-19 era.



This issue of **ADVANCE |step by step** features two of the youth ministries in our state - I encourage you to read those articles. These are not the only youth ministries - this is just a snapshot.

*May I implore you to encourage our children and youth leaders however you can. It is not an easy task, especially given the current circumstances, and they need your support.*

### Youth Video Opportunity

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I am creating a generations video to celebrate the young lives in our Baptist movement - it will be a compilation of spoken verses, along with videos and/or photos of thankfulness. If you're a youth, young adult, or have a young family, we would love you to be involved.

A few thoughts I've had:

- 10 seconds each of something you're learning in this time,
- Photo collage of things you're grateful for,
- Written things on paper that you're grateful for
- A few seconds each of people reading a Bible passage.

Please let me know a) if you have ideas or need them and b) if you are happy to be involved in some way and permissions info:

[jenna@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenna@tasbaptists.org.au)



**Deadline for contributions is next Monday June 1st.**

Our youth and young adults are welcome to film or capture something that is quick and simple. Can you contribute something?

### A Time of Change

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As we all know, COVID-19 has slowed many of us down and forced us to change, quite quickly. I take my hat off to those who have embraced the required changes and adapted ministries for the sake of the people - it is

no small feat and, regardless of your involvement, your attitude and behaviour makes a world of difference. Thank you.

In late 2020 I had planned to take a team of young adults to Cambodia as a cultural exposure trip, through Global Interaction, but this has understandably been cancelled.

However, there are many exciting conversations around our state that include the possibility of a new regional combined youth group, day trips, weekend Aboriginal engagement trips, leaders retreat, and more.

What I am continuing to learn is that people are unique; plans change; change is good; good is a result of grace; grace is amazing; God deserves the glory.

## COVID-19 Outcomes

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Personally, with travel restrictions in place, I have spent the majority of my time touching base with people virtually, planning, writing, organising virtual retreats and corresponding with the Australian Baptist Youth Ministries (ABYM) team.

The ABYM team has two exciting projects on the go:

\* An interview with [Jake Mulder](#) (pictured left) from [Fuller Youth Institute](#) (FYI) regarding post-COVID-19.

\* A young adult engagement survey, to find statistics that represent the stories we have heard about young adults disengaging from church during COVID-19. Stay tuned for more information on these.

## Your Part in Our Story

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It is a privilege to journey with people, to walk the road of highs and lows with another - to weep, to laugh, to share, to bless, to be blessed - but it is a privilege that we should all have in common, regardless of the current demographic of your church.

Whether you're an existing leader, a child, a young adult, a parent, a grandparent, single, married, working, a student, retired, rich or poor, joyful or sorrowful, lacking time or lacking courage, you can have a role to play in helping raise up our younger generations into flourishing disciples of Christ.

Our young people need support and community - they need you - now, possibly more than ever.

So, what can you do? You can pray. You can serve. You can encourage. You can mentor. You can cook. You can contact parents. You can smile. You can ask good questions. You can welcome change.

*If you want to talk more about how you can support our younger generations, or if you are interested in some of the potential developments, please don't hesitate to contact me: [jenna@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenna@tasbaptists.org.au).*

**COMING UP: In the June/July ADVANCE /step by step, we will feature Jenna Blackwell to find out what she's passionate about, and what makes her tick!**

COVID-19:

# Youth Activities Take a U-Turn

By Citywide Youth Pastor, Dan Hutchison



*What a year 2020 has been so far - from camping on Maria Island and organising an Amazing Race around Hobart, to being forced online, resulting in even further connection.*

At the end of 2019 our Citywide MERGE youth team planned for an ambitious 2020. A mixture of outdoor events were planned to create a space for other youth ministries to join us, whether large or small. Our vision is to see every young person empowered to live life to the full, the way God intended.

Our "Why" has not changed. But the "How" certainly has.

## Testing, Testing

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As the restrictions came in we quickly adapted. In fact, at our last physical meeting I connected online to give the devotional message with the group. This allowed us to test if it was possible, show the youth how it worked and allowed me to still be involved in the night even though I had a cold.

The next week we were all on Zoom - a video conferencing program I am sure everyone is aware of now. But not just Zoom, we tried everything! Facebook watch parties, Netflix watch parties, online book club, Twitch and online Bible study groups.

We wanted to find a platform which allowed us to connect with where our young people were at physically (at home), and emotionally. Unfortunately, many of these programs didn't work as we had hoped.

**However there were three things that did work:**

### 1. Hangout Time

The hangout time was an open time on Zoom to play and connect over whatever the young people wanted to over Zoom. Games like online puzzles and Kahoot (online quiz) were hits.

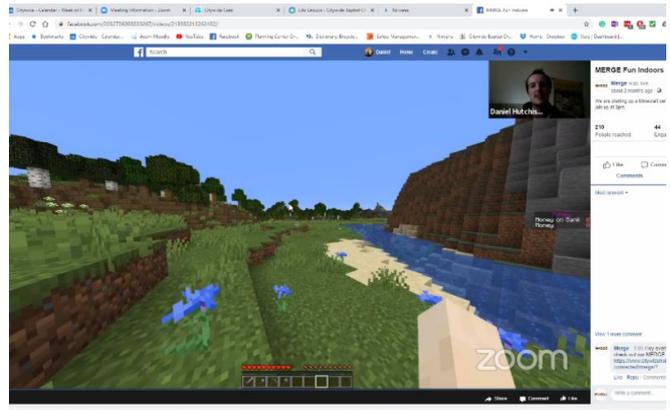
It has been a space to relax and have conversations with our young people other than their family.

## 2. Minecraft server

We wanted to be very intentional in connecting with our young people in ways they like to relax when at home. And there is no better way than through video games (see image below). Minecraft is labelled the "Lego Sandbox" for this generation and I have to admit, I've enjoyed learning how to play it. Our young people made some great creations.

We have had some issues with making our own server, and continue to. But when it was working we certainly had high involvement and commitment to creating a fun world to play in.

I would highly recommend for youth leaders to play online, and chat with young people as you work together on a world-saving quest. What a great way to bond!



## 3. Friday Night Youth on Zoom

Our young people were very keen to continue the weekly event around games and a message. In this structured time we would play games like Pictionary, crosswords, and a list of visual icebreaker games that we could do through the screen.

Keeping with our vision to partner with others, another bonus of this online format has been connecting with Wynyard Baptist youth group and supporting each other in this time.

As you can see in the screenshot, below, it's been nice to see everyone's faces for the whole night from all around Tasmania. The sessions have led to some really vulnerable moments of identifying the loss of connection with friends and family right now.

We have just finished a series on taking hold of this moment to care and connect with others.



## You Can Join In!

We're planning to continue running Friday nights on Zoom until the end of Term Two and it's not too late to join us if your youth group could use some friends in this time. So check out our website to join, or see what other things we are up to here ... [Citywide MERGE Youth >>>](#)

Now, as we're coming out of the restrictions and schools are going back, we are again reassessing what is the best way to connect. For some students, sitting all day in front of the computer is tiring and they want to disengage from screens. Others haven't had the technology or space to connect with us. We want to walk with all our young people, as this is going to be marathon and not a sprint.

This generation is one that's growing up connected to the world online, and made to stay home, away from it. We want them to know that Jesus still has big plans for them and right now He is shaping their characters to be resilient and creative.

I look forward to seeing what this unlocks in the next couple of years for His Church.

Dan Hutchison  
Citywide MERGE Youth

report:

## UB Youth

*Ulverstone Baptist Church has a thriving Youth program, with fortnightly activities on offer to create a community of faith and belonging.*

### 2020 Began with a Bang!

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Ulverstone Baptist started Youth 2020 with a **Paint War**, followed two weeks later by a **Beach Bonanza**. Our group held a **Chill Zone** night on the March long weekend, which was the final time our group met due to the COVID-19 restrictions.



### And then ... Pandemic

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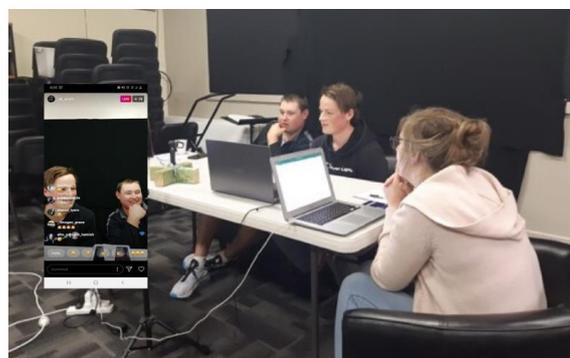
Soon after the restrictions came into place, we as a team tried to come up with ways to connect with our group during these difficult times.

A couple of leaders suggested in making care packs to distribute through to our youth. These packs included items such as: Easter eggs, lollies and a Gospel message. They also received a roll of toilet paper to show we've got a funny side!



On Friday May 15, two of our leaders ran a trivia night through our Instagram page (@ub\_youth). This was run with a total of 12 teams and many people tuning in to watch. We are looking into running another activity through our social media platforms, so feel free to give us a follow!

The leaders at UB Youth are looking forward to resuming with our group in the coming months. We run fortnightly on a Saturday night where we have games, worship/devotion and supper. If you would like more information, please follow our Instagram or Facebook page and send us a message.



God Bless!

***The Ulverstone Baptist Youth team***

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adventure:

## MERGE: Citywide Baptist Youth

Way back, preCOVID-19, the Citywide youth group, set off on a grand adventure, camping on Maria Island!

### Excitement and Challenges

Citywide Baptist Church youth group (MERGE) got out into the wilderness, with this year's summer camp at Maria Island. It was exciting to have for the first time our Nepalese congregation represented amongst the group of 12, who spent two nights on the island enjoying all it had to offer.

At the beginning of the camp, youth and leaders were divided into teams to buy supplies for a meal which they would then make for the camp. This was a lesson in being prepared when supplies are limited, and a sense of contributing to the group. We then continued by bus to the island ferry loading all our gear into two big buckets which we then carted by trolley to our new home for the next three days.

The next challenge was putting up the tents, with both tents clearly being the largest on the island. Once the camp was set up with all its luxuries, we headed off to find the painted cliffs. The youth enjoyed searching the rock pools and seeing the buildings that reference the history and life on the island over the centuries.

That night we got to tag along with the Discover ranger and learn about our native wildlife that we were sharing our campsite with. We saw lots of wombats, and even some kangaroos. When we returned from spotlighting we were greeted by three hungry brushtail possums who had found our jar of biscuits!



### Uphill – and Loving It!

The full day on the Island was spent walking up *Bishop and Clerk*, so named by the way the rocks have formed to look like a praying Bishop with a clergymen following behind. The walk took us four hours with some resistance to begin with, well, most of the way up.

However, the journey provided many great conversations and reaching the summit was a highlight for some. The views were certainly breathtaking as we observed the island from the peak.



## Island-Days: Reflections and Prayer

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Each day we reflected on God's word, first on God's provision when resource is limited, being that we were "on the island, off an island". In the down time we spent time reading John 15:1-17 and Romans 12 to remind us that God is the Gardner, and that we are unique. But when we are united we can do anything.

The time together was a great opportunity to grow in relationship, learn about this land God had created; all that inhabit it; and therefore our part to play as the next generation. It was also a great way to start the year, and learn how we can be praying for our young people as they started a new year at school, and for some a new school.



Some of the best moments with our young people were seeing them include others in the camp with a game of soccer, kicking the footy on the beach at dusk, and achievement of getting to the summit of Bishop and Clerk.

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Comments and submissions to Advance can be sent to:  
Email: [jenny@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenny@tasbaptists.org.au)

Website: [www.tasbaptists.org.au/news](http://www.tasbaptists.org.au/news)

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