



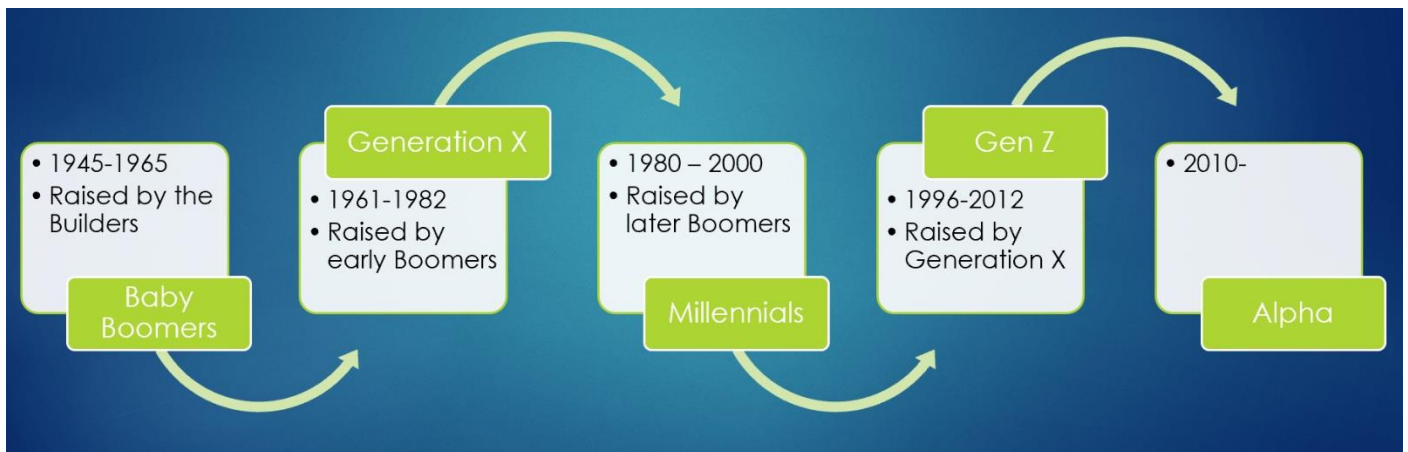
The ABC's of Ministry with Gen Z

WAUSAU CATHOLIC DEANERY

Presented by Tom East (tomeast.com)

Here comes Generation Z, which includes youth born from about 1995 to 2012 (ages 10 to 26). These young people are tech integrated, social innovators, and are looking for a customized way to belong and contribute. These young people are feeling increasingly isolated and anxious. Many have lost trust in institutions including religion. *We can listen, learn from these young world changers, and engage this generation of new disciples in helping to transform our parishes into centers of evangelization and service.*

Generational Cohorts



**TELL US
ABOUT YOUR
EXPERIENCE**



Gen Z Youth are Tech Addicts

Reality

- ▶ Digital Connection is a given, are connected 9 hours a day, **but**
- ▶ Gen Z youth prefer face to face communication

Gen Z Youth are Entitled

Reality

- ▶ Are accustomed to comfort, **but**
- ▶ Are not particularly materialistic (crave experiences more than stuff)
- ▶ Are economically conservative and were very shaped by the Great Recession

It Should be Called Gen Lay-Z

Reality

- ▶ Can be distracted and anxious, **but**
- ▶ Have grown up in a constant state of war and social change
- ▶ Most educated generation in history
- ▶ Are entrepreneurial and desire to address root issues of challenges and change the world



- ▶ How would you describe young people in Gen Z?
- ▶ What do you notice about their gifts and characteristics?
- ▶ What are their challenges?



Synched with Technology

- ▶ Digitally Integrated – Like the air they breathe!

Technology is essential for

- ▶ building relationships
- ▶ engagement with community and with the world
- ▶ learning
- ▶ engagement with faith



Expecting Access

- ▶ **Not** looking for pre-packaged ways to engage and belong
- ▶ Looking for customized pathways to access what they need

Hungry for In-Person Connections and Transforming Relationships

- ▶ Face to face is preferred way to communicate
- ▶ Seeking relationships with adults, peers and children based on mutual respect and understanding



Seeking to Change the World

- ▶ Interested in fostering sustainable and long-term social change
- ▶ Volunteer in high numbers (26% of 16-19 year olds)
- ▶ Have grown up being “voluntold” (forced to volunteer)
- ▶ They want to create solutions – found a movement – become the change they want to see in the world
- ▶ They can be easily disillusioned when idealism meets cynicism and challenges



Hungry for experiences of prayer, silence, mystery

- ▶ Constant digital connectivity, anxiety, and competing demands enhance a hunger for opportunities to disconnect, experience awe and be engulfed by peace



Anxiety

Roy Petifils

In the last 10 years, the occurrence of anxiety among youth has increased from 1 in 10, to 1 in 3 youth between the ages of 12-17. These young people meet clinically significant criteria for anxiety disorder. There are also teens who are displaying the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder without an identifiable event or cause. Teens are also anxious about the future and thinking about “post-graduation.”

These are some reasons for this “anxiety epidemic” among youth:

- Over commitment
- Managing various expectations
- Overuse of media
- Over exposure to violence
- Genetic factors

These are some things that can help.

- Rituals
- Physical Exercise
- Specific grounding and breathing techniques
- Prioritizing their commitments and schedules
- Psychotherapy and Medication



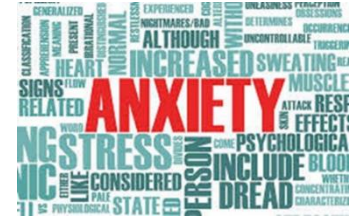
Religious Practice Makes a Difference

In Liturgy, we let go of our personal pattern of blame, shame, and escape as we connect to the pattern that Christ revealed: Life will be suffering and death, but it is also transformation and resurrection.

Personal burdens, brokenness, and anxiety become connected and transformed by the paschal mystery through:

- Ritual (The root to the word for ritual means “a way our lives fit together”)
- Sacred Space (Just our presence in sacred space soothes our soul.)

- Physicality of Prayer (Praying with our bodies, signing ourselves, standing, sitting and kneeling, our physical actions helps our body and mind connect with truth beyond what we understand)
- Community (Within a community gathered with God, we can hold the gift of who we are and the brokenness of who we are. We were never meant to carry the burden alone.)



“The adolescent brain is hypersensitive to novel stimuli, and the overabundance of what is available to teens today is unprecedented, overriding their need for routine, stability and sameness. The predictability, pattern, and rote behaviors that liturgy and ritual provide calms and soothes. This is not something most teens today can anticipate, but something they discover after experiencing it. Because they take so little time for reflection, they often don't connect the peace, security, and calm they feel with Liturgy and ritual.”

Roy Petifils

Resources:

www.roypetifils.com

Roy Petifils, *What Teens Want You to Know (But won't Tell You)*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Franciscan Media, 2015).



- <http://www.roypetifils.com/anxiety/>
- <http://www.roypetifils.com/anxiety-epidemic-part-2/>
- <http://www.roypetifils.com/helping-teens-plan-future/>
- this was the FB live video I did on how religion helps anxious teens <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEKxqi8qZss> Hope this helps brother!

Needing to connect faith and science

- ▶ Faith and science seem incompatible which is reinforced by culture
- ▶ Rise of the “None’s” – No affiliation is now largest denomination.
- ▶ 21.3% of class of 2019 is agnostic



“But the world, precisely as created by a divine intelligence, is thoroughly intelligible, and hence scientists have the confidence to seek, explore, and experiment. This is why thoughtful Christians must battle the myth of the eternal warfare of science and religion. We must continually preach, as John Paul II did, that faith and reason are complementary and compatible paths toward the knowledge of truth.”

Bishop Robert Barron

<https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/the-myth-of-the-war-between-science-and-religion/331/>



“...we are not afraid of what science discovers and where scientific discovery will lead us. Science is not a threat to our faith; instead it leads us deeper into the mystery of our faith. Scientific inquiry and discovery is a joyful pursuit and not something we engage in with suspicion. We see the world with clearer eyes and we see God more explicitly at work as we grow in our understanding of the universe and its marvels. This can only lead to joy for the believer.”



Robert Feduccia

<http://www.robertfeduccia.com/blog/2015/8/4/in-dialogue-with-atheists-five-things-to-consider-part-3>

Exploring New Ways to Learn

- ▶ Highly educated (1 in 2 will be university educated)
- ▶ Craves learning and new information
- ▶ Expects engagement
- ▶ Short attention span
- ▶ Learns through experience, collaboration, creation, engagement of senses, emotions, and relationships



Tolerant and Diverse

- ▶ Most racially diverse generation in United States history.
- ▶ Highly values tolerance, not just accepting, but affirming differences

They are Ethnically Diverse

- ▶ In the US by 2020, 55% of those under 18 will be non-Caucasian
- ▶ There is a 50% increase in youth who identify as multi-racial since 2000



Summary – Members of Generation Z are...

- ▶ Synched with technology
- ▶ Expecting access
- ▶ Looking for in-person connections and transforming relationships
- ▶ Seeking to change the world
- ▶ Hungry for experiences of prayer, silence, mystery
- ▶ Needing to connect faith and science
- ▶ Exploring new ways to learn
- ▶ Tolerant and diverse



More Religious and Spiritual

“Gen Zers’ participation in religion is up compared with previous generations. When asked about spirituality, 47 percent said they were religious, and an additional 31 percent said they were spiritual but not religious. Church attendance is also up during young adulthood, with 41 percent saying they attend weekly religious services, compared with 18 percent of millennials at the same ages, 21 percent of Generation X, and 26 percent of baby boomers.”

Joan Hope, Ph.D., Editor, “Get Your Campus Ready for Generation Z”, The Successful Registrar – Managing Records, Systems and Staff, September 2016, Volume 16, Issue 7.

Comparison with Millennials

Compiled from: Generation Z Goes to College, Corey Seemiller and Grace Meghan, Jossey-Bass, 2016

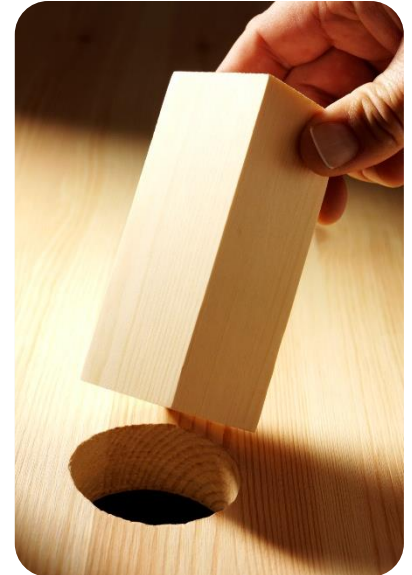
Millennial Generation

Generation Z

Socially and financially liberal	Socially liberal to moderate, financially moderate to conservative
More optimistic	More realistic
Service-oriented	Social-change-oriented
Confident (high sense of self-importance)	Confident (self-assured)
“Me” generation	“We” generation
Tech savvy	Tech integrated
Facebook to share	Instagram to share
Share	Follow
Prescheduled learning	On demand/just-in-time learning
Want to learn something? Google it	Want to learn something? YouTube it

What Gen Z Youth are not looking for...

- They are not looking **to be force fit into joining a group.**
 - Gen Z youth want to belong. They want to strengthen relationships with their family and build relationships with peers and adults. They want to belong to the parish and feel a sense of belonging with other young people, but they don't necessarily want to join a group that meets for the same purpose at the same time on a regular basis. They want to choose how and when to be involved and they don't see why that should impact how they are accepted or how they participate.
- They are not looking **for passive reception of information that is dispensed on our timeline.**
 - If Gen Z youth like a TV show, they binge watch several episodes at the time that they choose. If they want to see the scoring touchdown or the funny skit from a favorite show or a great scene from a movie, they access it online, now. When we get their attention and they want to grow in faith, many youth don't want to just receive the information in a passive way in the order and at the pace that we have chosen. We need to look at faith learning differently. We need to get their attention, get them involved, and once they are curious, we need to be a resource that feeds their curiosity and their hunger to grow in faith.



- They are not looking **for a way to be bored.**

- It's really hard to lead ministry and share faith while looking out at a sea of bored faces. We can blame it on youth, on their short attention spans, and unreasonable expectations about being entertained all the time. The truth is, we can do a better job. As evangelists and catechists, we need to speak in a way that they will hear us. We can take the time to listen, and learn about young people and understand how they learn. We can take the time to choose faith content that connects with their lives, and make it interesting. We can be vulnerable and make it personal. We can involve them in the process. It's about creativity, planning, teamwork, and investing time. We need to invest our time and energies in presenting the faith in a compelling way that speaks to young people's lives.



- They are not looking **for a place where they feel locked out.**

- Gen Z youth have high expectations for access and transparency. Parishes are complicated systems, and can be hard to navigate, even for adults. Youth today will invest themselves in places that they can access and influence. Compared to the other parts of their life, they can feel “locked out” of parish life when they don't feel that they are listened to, when they don't feel included or considered in decisions, when they aren't included in ministries, or leadership, when they don't get information they need to participate, and when they don't see other young people in visible roles. We can open the locks of parish life so that they feel like family.



Doing Ministry in A Missionary Key

Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.

Evangelii Gaudium, #33

Creating Onramps for Youth Engagement

► Support the World Changers

- Help youth connect faith to the issues in their community and the world about which they are passionate.
- Support youth as they engage in social innovation, using their creativity to solve problems, big and small, and help build the Kingdom!

Try This!

- Introduce young people to young world changers, people who are their age who are solving problems in the world right now. As part of your process, use the resources provided on pages 44-45 and “Oceans – Where Feet May Fail” PowerPoint Presentation included in the workshop website: www.cmdnet.org/genzresources
- In providing follow-through for your next service event, gather youth for a retreat day that focuses on social innovation, including the steps and exercises identified in this workshop.



► Evangelize Youth through Technology

- Meet youth where they are by engaging them in faith dialogue through technology.
- Support youth to become Digital Disciples.

Try This!

- Gather a social media evangelization team for your community that includes youth and adults. Consider young adult leaders who aren't part of your current team but who have skills in social media, marketing, and communication. As a team create strategies for web presence, social media and communication with youth and with parents.

► Engage Parents – Form Family Faith

- Build relationships and provide support to parents of Gen Z youth.
- Support families of youth as they form faith at home, engage in parish life, connect with the Catholic School, and join together in their “vocation to love.”



Try This!

- Gather with parents for a listening session. Find out what they are experiencing in your parish. What are the ways they are feeling supported? What are their challenges in participating engaging? What are they looking for?
- Prepare a presentation about Gen Z youth to provide for parents in your community, or prepare a presentation for youth and parents to learn more about each other!
- Host seasonal gathering for youth and their families for faith and fun – consider an outdoors movie night in the spring, a hike and campfire in the summer, a service event in the fall, and a prayer service for advent.

► A Customized Pathway

- Create customized pathways for youth to be involved and to grow spiritually.

Try This!

- Gather the information about youth in your parish or Catholic school. Use a resource to keep track of contact information, interests, gifts, challenges, and participation.

Consider this resource:

<http://minhubapp.com/>

This is an app that provides a way to keep track of youth interests, gifts and participation. You create a profile for each youth, including a picture. When you have an event, a member of the team walks around with their tablet and checks each young person in by touching their picture. This means you can communicate with youth and with families of youth after they participate.

- Create Individualized Spirituality Plans (ISP's) for young people. An ISP is a plan you create with a young person that focuses participation and resources on areas that they are most ready to grow. You might begin to use this strategy with a specific group of youth, such as youth who have participated in a retreat, or youth who are preparing for Confirmation.

► A Way to Access What They Need

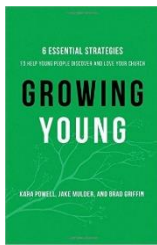
- Identify the ways that youth can be involved in your parish or Catholic school.
- Work with ministry leaders to open up participation and shared leadership with youth so that youth can become more involved in liturgy, service, faith formation, ministries, and leadership roles in your parish.
- Communicate to youth ways to access resources and choose involvements in your community.



Try This!

- Prepare a presentation about Gen Z youth to share with parish leadership groups and ministries. Follow the presentation with brainstorming about the ways to increase youth participation and involvement.
- Meet with youth to identify their interests and needs, along with the challenges, obstacles, and “hurdles” for their participation.
- Develop a communications team that will focus on a multi-faceted campaign to engage youth in the life of your parish. Consider strategies for in-person communications, social media, postings on bulletin boards, and ways to spread information through personal networks.

Here are the resources for the Growing Young research project.



Project website:

<https://churchesgrowingyoung.com/>

Order book online:

https://www.amazon.com/Growing-Young-Essential-Strategies-Discover/dp/0801019257/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1489093152&sr=8-1&keywords=growing+young



► Experience of Faith

- Make faith hands on and heart on by building all faith formation around experiences. This will give youth something to do and something to care about.
- Catechize youth by preparing them for something that they want to do.
- Support them in using their creativity and leadership to engage in experiences of faith.

Try This!

- Transform evangelization and catechesis with youth by asking these questions:
 - What do I want them to know?
 - What is an experience that will help them learn and grow?
 - How can I prepare them for the experience?
 - How can I help them reflect on the experience?
 - How can I connect them to ongoing experiences that will sustain their faith learning?
- Be intentional in utilizing experience by using the “Prepare / Engage / Reflect” method. Choose an event, a liturgical season or feast, or an experience of service. Provide practical and catechetical preparation for the event. Engage in the event, and provide a way to reflect on the event and name growth in faith.

Hey Young Church – We’re Listening

In November 2017, Papal Nuncio Christophe Pierre gave an address today at the USCCB that is a preview for the upcoming Synod on Youth and Vocation: **We are called to listen.** "We have been describing young people and their relationship to the Church. If we are to help young people discern God's plan for their lives, we might ask: what are they looking for? They are looking to be heard. Earlier I mentioned the idea of accompaniment, which implies going to them and being with them. To this, we add listening to them. Listening is an important element of discernment. Pope Francis said:

'I think that in the pastoral ministry of the Church many beautiful things are being done, many beautiful things... But there is one thing that we must do more, even the priests, even the lay people, but above all the priests must do more: the apostolate of listening: to listen!' (Incontro del Santo Padre con i partecipanti a/ convegno per persone disabili, 11 giugno 2016)"

<http://www.usccb.org/.../usccb-general-assembly-november-2016...>

Listening is the starting point for all ministry. What does it mean to really listen to young people? We need to pause in our quest of sharing with them all the things that they need to know and take some time to really hear their story. Where do they see God? How do they experience our parish? What is their experience of youth ministry? As you discern and plan for your ministry time with youth in this new year. Take some time to listen. Let the conversation go where it will. Here are some questions that could prime the pump:

- Listen to their questions and acknowledge that we also have questions and doubts.
- Ask questions and encourage youth share about their experience of God.
 - *Where do you see God?*
 - *Are there places that you especially experience God's presence?*
 - *Who are the people whom you see as being filled with faith?*
 - *Are there activities in which you feel close to God?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of their parish
 - *What is your experience of belonging to our parish?*
 - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
 - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about belonging to our parish?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of youth ministry
 - *What is your experience of youth ministry?*
 - *If you were going to tell a friend about youth ministry in our parish, how would you describe it?*
 - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
 - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about participating in youth ministry?*



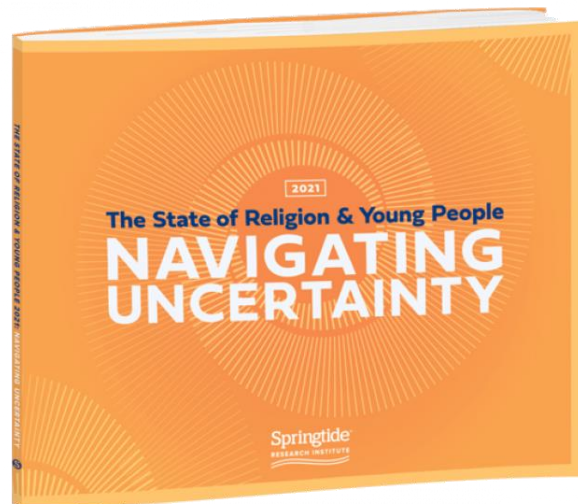
71%

of young people say they are **religious**.



78%

of young people say they are **spiritual**.



<https://www.springtideresearch.org/research/the-state-of-religion-2021>

58%



of young people ages 13 to 25 told us, "I do not like to be told answers about faith and religion, I'd rather discover my own answers."

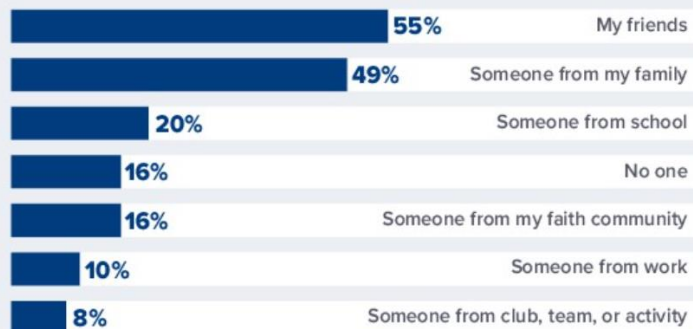
54%



report, "Religious communities try to fix my problem, instead of just being there for me."

When you have felt overwhelmed and didn't know what to do about something, who did you turn to for help?

Participants were allowed to select more than one option.

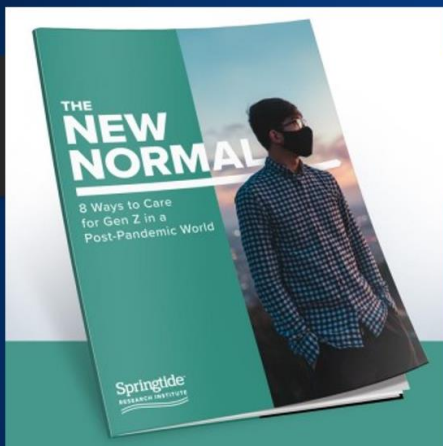


Nearly 70% of young people tell us that after the pandemic they "won't take for granted relationships and opportunities the way [they] did before."

FAITH UNBUNDLED -*Navigating Uncertainty*

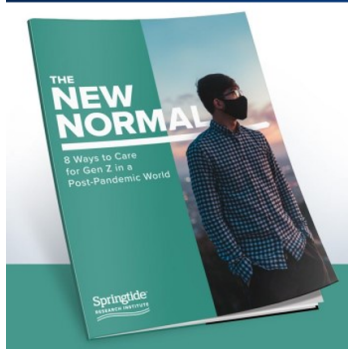
Faith Unbundled is a term that describes the way young people increasingly construct their faith by combining elements such as beliefs, identity, practices, and community from a variety of religious and non-religious sources, rather than receiving all these things from a single, intact system or tradition.

- **Cultivate curiosity**
- **Listen**
- **Accompany**



- *Rebuild Trust*
- *Understand Where Young People Are*
- *Exercise Empathy*

SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?



- *CREATE SAFETY* to help young people regain their footing
- *GRIEVE WHAT'S BEEN LOST* without dwelling on the negatives
- *CELEBRATE WHAT'S BEEN GAINED* without insisting on optimism
- *RESIST COMPARISON* by making space for a range of emotions
- *GET TOGETHER* to combat isolation with intentional gatherings
- *TAKE CARE OF THE BODY* to help the body and mind process stress
- *TURN TO THE ARTS AND NATURE* to find new modes of expression
- *FOCUS ON THE PRACTICAL* by offering young people concrete help

GROUP WORK

Review this list.

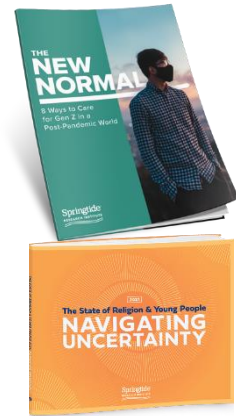
- What do you sense youth need the most?
- How do the resources of your ministry and your parish match up with what youth need in this moment?
- What do you want to do to welcome youth back to ministry and accompaniment?

Resources about Generation Z

Books

<https://www.springtideresearch.org/research/the-new-normal>

<https://www.springtideresearch.org/research/the-state-of-religion-2021>



Resources/Websites

Gen Alpha and Gen Z

<https://www.c-mw.net/generation-alpha-more-gen-z-than-gen-z/#:~:text=From%20the%20perspective%20of%202021,of%20previous%20generations'%20analogue%20ways.>

<https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blogarchive/gen-z-and-gen-alpha-infographic-update/>

Pew Research

Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>

On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future

What We Know about Gen Z So Far

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/>