

Maybe you've noticed—many of the younger generation aren't reading Ellen White. Often the problem is that, to them, her writings have lost their relevance. So how can church leaders, including teachers and educational administrators, encourage young people to read her books?

**1. You are the introduction!** People associate the message with the messenger. If you project a sad, angry, or judgmental attitude, unconsciously young people will project this onto Ellen White's writing. They will also pick up on your nonverbalized attitudes. Make sure the introduction is positive. No one should be introduced to Ellen White with, "Ellen White says you shouldn't . . . ."

**2. The guilt trip probably won't work.** The younger generation has much to keep them entertained. For many, reading is difficult, as they are tuned into visual stimuli. They need to be shown the relevance of her writings in order for them to make the effort to explore her writings.

**3. Share your experience.** One way you can show relevance is by sharing your experience. How did an Ellen White book bring you closer to God? How did it help you in a crisis? What practical advice from her writings helps you solve a problem?

**4. Share a favorite quote.** While younger generations might not be into lengthy reading, they are quick to latch on to short, relevant quotes. Short quotes, preferably one or two lines, will go further and have more of an impact than longer paragraphs. The challenge is to not take these quotes out of context. It is also important to select positive, Christ-centered quotes. Yes, Ellen White has many pointed things to say about sin and sinful practices, but until young people have their own personal relationship with Jesus, these statements will be more likely to repel than draw them.

**5. Tell human interest stories.** For some, Ellen White seems to be a kind of Adventist saint—far removed from our daily struggles. Leaders have sometimes been embarrassed to tell of her struggles and victories, thinking that these would somehow discredit her to a younger generation. In fact, it does the opposite. Knowing she had struggles and challenges makes her relatable and demonstrates God's ability to carry each of us through life's challenges.

**6. Give a book.** Encourage the practice of giving a high quality (not a cheap paperback) book such as *Steps to Christ* for special occasions. Baptisms, birthdays, or graduations can be important moments to gift a book. Be sure the young person knows this is personal (perhaps with his or her name en-

# Introducing Ellen White TO A NEW GENERATION

graved) and not some sort of advertising.

**7. Positively role model advice.** This is perhaps the most difficult but also the most effective way to get young people reading Ellen White's writings. They are looking and wondering if her writings really make a difference. Are the leaders who quote Ellen White the nicest or nastiest Christians? Do they have happy, healthy marriages? What is their relationship to their children? Do they loudly promote a vegetarian diet and just as loudly announce that they hardly ever get more than four hours sleep at night because they are so busy working? Young people are not looking for perfection, but authenticity.

**8. Never use Ellen White as a weapon** or club to beat a young person into submission or try to control others. The first application of her advice should always begin with the individual teacher or educational administrator.

Ellen White's writings have much to offer. By God's grace, Adventist educators can help young people discover in her writings biblical principles, timeless advice, and a saving relationship with Jesus. ✍

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