

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

December 2023



Time is on Our Side??? | Steve Pausch

We have turned the clocks back and the leaves have left their branches. It's the time of the year again when stores are filling up and the **limited time only** sales abound. I was buying supplies for a teen meeting the other night, when I walked by a "Limited Time Only" sign while at the same time, a song was playing on the store intercom. It was an old song, "Time Is On My Side". I couldn't help but think about the irony of seeing "Limited Time Only" and hearing "Time is On My Side", but that made me think about our YFC Ministry to teens.

We work with teens, so that initially proves that we don't have much time. We focus on the 11-19-year-old young person. Statistics show 83% of Americans choose Jesus before turning 18, so we only have a limited window to reach them with the Good News.

We have a very active ministry in the Sandusky County Juvenile Detention Center working with young people who are incarcerated. Leaders meet several times a week with those young people and present the teachings of Jesus in many different ways. However, young people are there for a limited time before being released.

Our largest numbers at our ministry sites are often the young people who are middle school-aged, because they seem to be a little less involved in many other activities. Once a teen gets a license and a job, we seem to see them less often at our activities. We try to focus on these young students and build those friendships where we share what it means to follow Jesus. We focus on getting to them and sharing the love of Christ before they get older. So, there is a "Limited Time Only" factor to reaching mid-

dle school students, also.

The Christmas season is fast approaching, and over the many years of ministry, I have seen an unprecedented openness to the Gospel message during the Christmas season. We really focus on this time of year and do more meetings and dinner appointments with teens in an effort to help them choose to follow Christ. I would ask you to pray for our staff and adult leaders as we fill up the calendar during this time to help teens choose Christ.

The end of the year is the time when YFC, like many ministries, see their largest financial gifts arrive in the mailbox to support our work. This year, as a result of more teens being involved in more places, we are in need of more resources to keep feeding, providing activities, and helping young people. Would you consider a special gift this year to help support our growth and invest in the eternal future of the kids we reach?

Time is on our side. I am not sure about that, but we are doing all we can to use the time allotted us to show young people who Jesus is. We have been blessed this year to see our numbers surpassing pre-COVID numbers and to have so many teens who are interested in the things of Christ.

Jesus said in Revelation 22:7... “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

Thank you for your support as we try to bring as many teens with us to heaven as

Fun Times With Frozen Birds | Matt Mountjoy

Writing this now, Thanksgiving is coming up in a few days. But by the time you are reading this, you will probably be in full swing of preparing for Christmas festivities and my son Connor will be excited to be able to choose “We Three Kings” as his post-prayer song choice. Maybe you have long been in Christmas season mode, but in my house, we wait until the day after Thanksgiving, so a common request from my almost 4-year-old is “I pick ‘the king song’ even though it isn’t Christmas yet!” Besides guaranteeing we will sing “the king song” every night for a month, one of our other traditions is setting up the Christmas decorations in the house while watching the old Claymation Rudolph movie. Holidays come with all sorts of traditions in most families, and for us at The Garage we have a few of our own traditions that tend to be big draws that kids look forward to. I wanted to take the chance to share one of ours with you and how it went!

Having great games to bring a fun atmosphere is always huge for youth ministry, so it's always cool when you end up with a game that you play once a year, and the kids look forward to it. One of the kids' favorites takes place the week before Thanksgiving: Frozen Turkey Bowling. The idea is simple. You get a frozen bird (as small as we can find because the smallest one is like the heaviest bowling ball), and you huck it across the concrete floor at pins. In our case the pins are 2-liter bottles filled with water. The bottles have surprisingly lasted for several years and occasionally only need a cracked lid replaced. The wall has not fared as well, and there is a turkey sized hole right now in the drywall from where we missed the backstop! Part of the fun is as the night goes the bird gets a little more beat up and a little more nasty. If you ever plan on playing this game bring LOTS OF HAND SANITIZER and be ready to sterilize the floor after! The best part is that large groups of kids got to hear great lessons of truth from the Bible. One Wednesday night, we wrapped up our "famous Bible 'stories'" series discussing how you love your neighbor while looking at the Parable of The Good Samaritan. Thursday night one of our mentors, Cynthia, shared on value. There were great conversations that night about what we value, what God values, and how that impacts us!

The Hope of Jesus | Laurie Beal

Youth for Christ is an organization that is centered on uncovering God's story of Hope in young people's lives. Jesus is the life in all our stories. We try to bring that truth to life by building a Christ-centered community where young people can feel at home and feel safe and be encouraged as they find that Hope for themselves.

Today's teens have so many arrows being flung at them by the adversary. Our young parents who are pregnant or already parenting have an extra load of these arrows to pluck out of them and then sift through the lies they contain. There is society telling them there is an easier route than a new baby in their arms. Exit ramps being made more accessible can make the lie seem even more tempting. These young people lose friends and family support along the way, and the darts telling them there is no hope and no future can bring an excruciating sting. They often feel their value crumble, along with their dreams.

Our team of mentors who surround our young moms and dads and babies readily take on the challenge and the huge responsibility (and the joy) of helping "unstick" those messages. We have those hard conversations about abortion and speak Truth to them. We embrace tightly and offer emotional support. We cheer them on and cele-

brate their victories with them and hold them up when they face the hard stuff...a boyfriend in jail, a friend that has committed suicide, being kicked out of their house, an abusive relationship. We provide a safe space each week where they can unpack and just be real and begin to heal. There is food to nourish their bodies, and there is community and the message of the Hope of Jesus to nourish their souls. We help them with physical needs such as diapers and wipes and clothing and blankets and cribs and strollers and everything "baby". We take them to appointments and visit them in the hospital. We help plug them in to all the agencies and programs they may need to succeed. They learn to trust that we are truly there for them and to give them that "extra" that they need to get started on the beautiful journey of parenthood. We form lifelong friendships in this ministry, between mentors and with the girls and guys and their babies.

The most beautiful relationship to see is when these young people grasp the reality and the message we are sharing of the Hope and Future that only God can provide for them and they hold tight to a God who will be there for them for the WHOLE journey! We are so thankful to all of you who make this ministry possible!

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord; plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans for a hope and a future

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