

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

November 2022



The Harvest is Plentiful and the Tractors are Slow! | Steve Pausch

This time of year, my daily commute across our ministry areas is often slowed by a large tractor in the road moving to a new field. It is harvest time and the farmers are busy bringing in their crops from a long season of hard work. Many years ago, I was often frustrated to be “stuck” behind a tractor. But, since getting to know several farmers very well, I have a profound appreciation for what they do and provide for all of us.

Sometimes, I hear people say that farmers only have to work in the spring and fall and that they have the rest of the time off. Nothing can be further from the truth. Farming is a year-round, very full-time job. I have also heard people say that pastors only work on Sundays, and we know that, too, is not the real story.

Thinking about all that farmers do also got me thinking a bit of the comparison between our work at YFC and that of a farmer. I, in no way, am lessening the impact farmers make on the world around us, but since Jesus compared the work of a farmer to the work of the Kingdom I feel it is a just comparison.

Farmers prepare the soil by tilling and breaking it up. YFC staff go out and meet young people in their world.

Farmers add fertilizer and nutrients. YFC staff show interest in new teens by attending school events, games, concerts, etc..

Farmers prepare and plant seeds. YFC staff invite teens to meetings, events, and show interest in their activities.

Farmers check and test soil. YFC staff introduce teens to God at local meetings and over dinner.

Farmers treat plants according to need. YFC staff talk to teens about their need for a Savior

Farmers plan for the harvest, and get equipment ready. YFC staff invite guest speakers, take teens to events.

Farmers are aware of the weather. YFC staff take teens to dinner appointment to see where they are with Christ.

Farmers harvest their crop. YFC staff present the Gospel and ask teens to respond.

Farmers distribute their harvest. YFC staff help new believers get involved in local churches.

He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴ As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! ⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand." Matthew 13:3-9 NLT

YFC staff do everything possible to make sure that the young people in our care hear God's message of salvation in a way that they can understand. Thank you for making this ministry possible with your prayers and financial gifts.

Messy | Laurie Beal

Ministry is messy. This phrase is used a lot by people in ministry, and it's very true. To expand on this, the mess is also layered and heavy and intertwining. It's hard to begin jumping into life with a teen and keep it limited to Thursday nights, 6:30 to 8:30.

We find ourselves at their extracurricular activities, getting messages throughout the week about issues they are struggling with, praying with and for them, having conversations with their parents when we drop them off (learning even more about the dynamics) and then, naturally, getting looped even more into their life.

It can be heavy, but THIS is what we are striving for. If we find ourselves mixed in with the clutter of a teen's life, we know we are doing the relationship building piece of ministry right. It's a balance of answering God's calling and direction, setting up some healthy boundaries, yet not setting up barricades. We often get calls at all hours of the day and night asking for help in dealing with a crisis. Recently, I got a phone call from a mom of one of our teens who had just graduated. She was hysterical, and I

was struggling to understand what she was saying. I heard the boy's name and suicide and heard a word that signaled he had a plan. He had also written a goodbye note on his bedroom door with a sharpie.

I am certified in suicide prevention, but each time I am in the position of helping a teen/ family in a suicide crisis it is unsettling, to say the least. There are no guarantees. I left home immediately and went to the area this young man indicated he was heading, praying and pleading with God for mercy the whole way there. I was first on scene and headed back into the woods calling his name and looking into the trees fearing what I might see... yet fearing more what I could help prevent if I didn't keep moving. Words cannot possibly, adequately explain the level of "messy" this type of situation is or where your heart is at in this moment.

After more than 20 police cars and vehicles and drones and canines and crisis vehicles joined the search, we were able to locate this young man before he carried out his plan. As he walked out of the woods with a police officer towards a cruiser, he did not look happy with me or his parents for squelching his intent. However, after several days of a stay in the psych department, he surprised me by showing up on my front porch with his parents. His mom pointed out that he hadn't even gotten his shoes back and they had just left and he insisted on stopping to thank me before they went home. We ALL exchanged big hugs, and I was able to remind him of his great worth to this world, that he was created with purpose and on purpose by a God that loves him so much!

THEN, 2 weeks later, our dogs had slipped through an unlatched door and while our huge labradoodle was located the next day, our little 10-year-old poodle mix remained missing for an entire week. This young man and his parents spent HOURS all through the week helping look for him. The teen walked through the same woods I had just walked through looking for him. And when we finally located Kooper an entire week after he got out, shared the good news on Facebook and had just gotten home with him, there was a loud knock at the door. I answered and saw the trio again on my doorstep, this time to celebrate with me and exchange more hugs. And there his mom stood without shoes this time...she was so excited she left right when she heard the news.

So, yes, ministry is messy...AND it's a beautiful mess

Wednesday Update | Matt Mountjoy

The Wednesday night group has been a fun time this year. Its been a great opportunity to get to dig in more with some of the kids I coach in football and a few others that used to play. The group is consistent and really has a fun time together. We are just now working on trying to get them to invite more friends in on the fun! Weekly, we have anywhere from 6-10 guys, depending on if some of them are playing Frisbee Golf. We have a few guys who take that pretty seriously! The group is always up for a good game, and they engage well in conversations and the lessons too.

I'm really looking forward to what the future of this year holds with this group! While the group isn't huge right now, we should be able to organize some more special events than we have in the past, which means more unique chances to share the Gospel! The next big thing we are looking forward to in a few weeks is taking the group of guys out to Steve Pausch's house for some food, fun, and great conversations!

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