

Vision Statement

Our vision is to empower youth and their families in their faith and help bring them closer to Christ through the teaching of God's Word, prayer, intentional relationships, missional service, and strategic partnerships. We will do so with the following guiding principles (Principles based on LEFC resource):

- Love God (*Matthew 22:37*)
- Love People (*Matthew 5:43-44, 22:39*)
- Live Truth (*James 2:14-26*)
- Proclaim Jesus (*Acts 1:6-8*)

Strategy

Our strategy seeks to form a general framework for reaching students while also leaving room for flexibility as each unique student is approached. Our strategy is guided by the following categories:

Partnership with the Holy Spirit

Ultimately, while we may do awesome, Biblically, based events, pour into the lives of students, and more, if the Holy Spirit is not actively convicting a student or their family's hearts then true change won't happen. This is why it is crucial that are leaders are consistently praying – praying for guidance as we seek to reach teens, as well as, praying that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of these students and their families. Ministry cannot be done apart from God; therefore, we should be consistently praying to God as we are His tools for ministry.

(John 15:26-27, John 16:7-14, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Ephesians 6:18-20)

Biblical Teaching

Youth ministry should be a fun time for kids to come together, hangout, build relationships, and more. However, if the Word of God, specifically the Gospel, is not being preached then we are missing the point. How can we expect youth ministry to truly play a role in bringing students and their families to Christ if we do not actually preach the Word of God to them? While there may not be a huge sermon at every event that we do, there must be consistent teaching of the truths of Scripture. It is our goal to present the Word of God in a clear, practical manner whenever it is preached.

(Psalm 19:7-11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12)

Intentional Relationships

It has been said that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. Often times before a teen or their family is ready to hear the Gospel, they need to see it in action. In our ministry it is our goal that each student and their family be connected either to our staff or volunteers in a meaningful way. The easiest way this can be seen is when a student is being disciplined by their small group leader. By intentionally connecting teens with mentors within the

youth group and in other ministries, we can have a meaningful impact on their lives beyond a simple three-point sermon. Often not only do these life-on-life relationships go deeper than any large group teaching time, they often have the potential to last far longer, even beyond the student's years within the youth group.

(Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 12:29-31, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Missional Service

Christians should never remain stagnant and our Christlike love must never be sequestered within our own Christian bubble. Instead our youth ministry desires to go out to serve and spread the Gospel in our local, regional, and international community. The core benefits of this are threefold. First, people may be saved as a result of God using our efforts for His glory. Second, the teens in our ministry get the opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission and see what it looks like to put faith in action. Third, those that are not saved, either the teens in our youth group or those watching our ministry, have the opportunity to see Christ's love in action and may be further drawn towards the Gospel as they see it in action.

(Matthew 25:31-40, Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 John 4:19-21)

Strategic Partnership

Youth ministry should never be done alone, which is why one should partner with parents, other church staff, volunteers, student leaders, parachurch ministries, teachers, coaches, and more. Parents should be the chief disciplers of their teens, and by equipping and bringing parents into the ministry, one can point both the teen and their family more effectively to Christ. By partnering with other ministries within the church, not only do students get the chance to serve in different areas, but also, they can get connected with other mentors. By having volunteers in the youth ministry, not only is leadership easier to manage, but also there are more people who can have a meaningful relationship with the youth and the circle of influence grows. By empowering student leaders, one can allow students to take ownership of their faith and the youth ministry, as well as, use their spiritual gifts. By working with parachurch ministries one can reach groups of people previously untouched and find new ways for students to serve. By partnering with key figures in a student's life one can impact a student throughout the week and provide more positive influences for the student. These are just a few of the ways that this ministry will seek to strategically work with those inside and around us to further God's work in the lives of our students.

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Acts 15:36-16:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, 2 Timothy 1:5)

Overall Philosophy

Youth ministry is a place where lives can be transformed by the Holy Spirit. It can serve as a training camp where students learn the truths of Scripture and how to live out their faith. It can serve as a hospital where wounds can find healing and caring relationships are formed. It is also an army where youth are mobilized to serve God's kingdom. Youth ministry is a unique, God-given time and place to pour into the lives of students and their families, and it is our privilege to serve in this area of ministry and further the kingdom of God.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!””

~Revelation 7:9-10

Works Cited

“What We Believe.” *Lancaster Evangelical Free Church*, <https://www.lefc.net/about/what-we-believe/>.