

11.08.09 Forum on Children's and Youth Ministry
Compilation of Discussion Notes

What is the outcome we hope, pray and work for as we seek to minister to our children and youth? In other words, what strengths do we hope will characterize our high school graduates as they leave ECC for their next phase of life?

Group 1

1. Strong relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Love for the Lord and his Word.
3. Connection with other youth.
4. Feel accepted by other youth and also in the youth group.

Group 2

1. Authentic relationship with God.
2. Active church life.
3. Christian worldview.
4. Spiritual preparation.
5. Accountability.

Group 3

1. Mission mindset.
2. Wanting to reach their peers.
3. Spiritual/general maturity.
4. Accepting of other peoples' lifestyles and worldviews.
5. Willingness to serve.
6. Making their faith personal.
7. Willingness to question a healthy way (not rebellious)
8. Accepting that a REAL relationship with Jesus is not neat and tidy, it is messy and hard and they are willing to walk the walk.

Group 4

1. We want them to continue in their walk with Christ.
2. By in-depth teaching in the Word of God.
3. Be equipped to defend their faith as they walk out in every day life.
4. Discipleship toward evangelism.
5. Accountability to others.
6. Recognizing giftedness.

Group 5

1. Strong faith foundation to discern what is of God.
2. Need to know what Bible says – foundation and able to defend.
3. Equip them to have a self-sustaining faith.
4. Demonstrate fruit of Spirit in character.
5. Know that God answers prayers and performs miracles.
6. Have intimate, personal relationship with Christ.

7. Know how to pick friends – social network.
8. Know how to steer your life.
9. Involved in ministry using gifts.
10. Able to explain faith on difficult topics – homosexuality, sexuality, evolution...

Group 6

1. Understand and desire a real relationship with Jesus daily.
2. Recognize truth and error.
3. Know that each person has had opportunity to accept Jesus.
4. Train to stand under pressure. Who is part of us.
5. Defend faith.
6. Counter celebrity worship and values taught by culture.
7. Know that they have a testimony. Practice sharing.
8. Know how to find a new church on their own. Discern.

Group 7

1. To know why I believe, not just what I believe.
2. How to address the worldly issues in a Biblical framework.
3. A knowledge of who they are in Christ and not being afraid to stand firm on that knowledge in the face of adversity.
4. A close relationship with Christ and a desire and passion to know him.
5. Equip our kids to go into the world and share the gospel.
6. Helping others (while in church [practice] and then after they are out of our presence [application]), our kids being the hands and feet of Christ.
7. A framework of ownership for the kids. They mold, engage, direct the youth ministry instead of just being a participant.
8. Know the Bible – “where is it written?”

Group 8

1. Know/meet Christ.
2. Disciples of Christ – growing.
3. Defend faith – own it.
4. Stay connected when leaving – seek others in college.
5. Able to stand to pressure – peers/teachers.
6. Kids would be part of ECC (or other church) – serve, worship – not an adolescent subculture but a total church culture.
7. Configure a “core knowledge” – what do we want kids to know by time they graduate?

Group 9

Answer: It should be the character of our high school graduates when they leave those years at ECC to move into worship, participation and service in our church or another church in the community in which they live. Strengths we trust will characterize our high school graduates are:

- a. Personal commitment to Christ (then and baptism).

- b. Ability to defend their faith (apologetics).
- c. Knowledge of what it means to engage in worship — genuine worship vs. socializing.
- d. Development of social skills (treating others with courtesy) – language, politeness.
- e. Reaching out in service to others – even when it’s not child’s first choice.
- f. Having an evangelistic attitude – able and willing to share their faith.
- g. Commitment to the concept of tithing.
- h. Recognizing and finding their giftedness.
- i. Biblically literate.
- j. Can pray comfortably, and effectively.

Group 10

1. We want our children to leave ECC with a strong knowledge of the bible. Where do you find things? Scripture memory, “hide God’s word in our hearts.” Application of Scripture to their daily lives.
2. Church should be a place where they want to be.
3. Church should be a priority for them when they are able to choose it for themselves.
4. Church should be a place where they are held accountable without condemnation. Accepted and forgiven. Safe place.
5. Love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind.
6. Opportunity to build relationships @ church.

Group 11

1. Leaders - trained and prepared as leaders.
2. Know how to interact with college, young adult ministries.
3. Able to express faith story.
4. Personal ownership of their faith, not identified only as faith of parents.
5. Equipped and trained to be a part of the church, community.
6. Understanding that we are all missionaries.
7. Desire to be a part of the church as adults.
8. Knowledge of giftedness and application of this inventory.
9. Servant hearts that understand needs.
10. Ownership of responsibility to serve others.

Group 12

1. Help youth develop a Christian world-view.
2. Take their faith to the work place or college.
3. Establish a relationship with Christ and members of the church.
4. Develop maturity.

Staff Group

1. Godly young men and women who can be strong in the world.
2. Know God’s truth.
3. Have their own faith.
4. Desire to join a body of believers.

5. Desire to reach out to those in need.
6. Desire to give of time, talents, and money.
7. Understanding the importance of staying connected.
8. Being wise to the world without being worldly.

How would our ministry to children and youth be shaped by our desired outcome, along with our mission statement and our five missional practices -- *WORSHIP, GROW, CONNECT, SERVE* and *GIVE*?

Group 1

1. Ministry has to be taught in youth group.
2. Give them some substance/structure in the youth group.
3. Teach them and train them in interesting ways.
4. Mentor for youth needed; someone to teach them, trained to mentor, youth leaders need to teach the youth to mentor others, disciple them.
5. Discipling is very important.
6. Service projects.

Group 2

1. Teaching kids to be spiritually connected to each other.
2. To hold each other accountable.
3. To be mentored and to be a mentor to those around us.

Group 3

1. Worship: having a set plan from week to week, more organized; reflection time to prepare hearts for worship and not making it just a bunch of songs.
2. Grow/Connect: more interaction between HS and JR High; making sure our small groups aren't becoming cliques; everyone who comes to youth group are friends; bring back EPOCH!
3. Serve: doing challenging service projects; HS showing examples of serving to JR High; HS birds-eye servants for JR. High.
4. Give: youth group sponsored child (supported by youth group).

Group 4

1. Service – cross-generational projects, experience
2. Small groups.
3. Better communication about goals and programs in the total Christian Education Program.
4. Sunday School, the in-depth training; Youth groups, the time of application outreach and evangelism.

Group 5

1. Youth lead worship
2. Attend youth camps (Covenant Mountain Bible Camp, Covenant Harbor, CHIC)
3. Systematic plan for teaching – all ages cover difficult topics, age appropriate.

4. Need good communication to parents.
5. Need to communicate structure to parents about what is happening each meeting (worship, small group, teaching, etc.)
6. More community outreach – involve kids as much as possible.

Group 6

1. Encourage very young to accept Christ. Age 5.
2. Teach to serve – allow opportunity to serve: choir, involve in worship.
3. Opportunity to be a leader.
4. Help youth get involved in an outreach. CHIC or Mountain Mission Virginia or Chicago trip.
5. Covenant Harbor and other resources of denomination. Covenant World Relief banks.
6. Small “break out” groups for youth.
7. Rent a teen.
8. Life not easy.

Group 7

1. KNOWING THE BIBLE
 - a. K-5 has a good, structured curriculum but middle/high school doesn't. Need a structured curriculum to follow after 5th grade – High School.
2. SHARING THE GOSPEL
 - a. (Greg Louk is a taskmaster and we didn't have time to fully explore this question).
3. Add a children's ministry (we have a youth CF and Youth Ministry; we have a Children's CF, but not a Children's Ministry)
4. Better understanding of the correlation of what we're doing in Youth and Children (a clear road map of how our kids go from “A” to “B”) and how it ties to the 5 missional practices.

Group 8

1. Does it fit into category (Missional Practices) – if it doesn't, don't do it.
2. These should guide thoughts in decision-making.

Group 9 [Zeimers: *italics*; group: regular type)

1. *Answer: We would like to provide:*
 - a. *Opportunities to commit their life to Christ through personal contacts or in group settings.*
 - b. *Scripture memory.*
 - c. *Small group and CF classes centered on Biblical teaching, not only cultural topics.*
 - d. *Large worship, special mission projects.*
 - e. *Activities giving opportunities for fun with each other and for bringing other students from their respective schools to church activities.*
 - f. *Leadership to encourage participation in all-church activities like Christmas for Everyone, Samaritan's Purse, earn money to travel to Haiti on a project, and tithe to the church or other Christian ministry if they are employed or receiving an allowance.*
 - g. *Training for parents or other leaders to assist in Bible studies, small group leadership.*
 - h. *Individual counseling for participants in the youth program.*
 - i. *Discipleship opportunities, esp. father/son, mother/daughter.*

Group 10

1. Worship should be relevant.
2. Make Bible practical and applicable.
3. Opportunity for growth for those we reach.
4. Supplement Sunday morning CF for all ages (weekday events)

Group 11

1. Provide opportunities to serve in organized projects and planned ministry.
2. Knowledge of talents and giftedness of children and youth to facilitate service and participation.
3. Personal interaction and investment of time that demonstrates growing relationship with youth and children.
4. Sensitive to the needs of single parent families.
5. Expressed expectations to participate in discipleship activities.
6. Routine opportunities for worship arts participation.
7. Service projects involving monetary and time gifts that are instructional for lifetime giving.
8. Incorporate children and youth routinely in all aspects of church life.

Group 12

1. Intentional, planned, organized opportunities to address each missional area.
2. Measureable feedback.
3. Follow-up with students after they move into adulthood.
4. Focus on our students and children to equip them to be agents of change for Christ in their world. Evangelism will be an outgrowth of ministry to our youth.

Staff Group

1. This church needs to give them a sense of ownership in worship. Recruited to be a part of worship service.
 - a. Testimonies.
 - b. Choir/worship team.
 - c. Ushers/greeters.
2. Disciple them to be able to disciple others.

What impact should our responses to the first two questions have on our current ministry to children and youth? Are there things we should keep doing, things we should stop doing, things we should be doing that we aren't?

Group 1

1. Having various youth groups is important.
2. Sports groups should not be primary focus of youth groups.
3. Scripture memory program is great.
4. Mix class groups of elementary age in some structure fashion.
5. Families in church impacted our youth.

6. Being more inclusive with youth, nor everybody is an athlete.
7. Whoever is in charge really get to know the kids, spend time, go to their events, take an interest in them (Young Life).
8. Tried youth group, nothing there, no meaning, not structured enough.
9. Children's Choir – children love to be seen.
10. Mentoring

Group 2

1. Kids service – build community with the young kids – AWANA, etc.
2. Connect ministries – intergenerational serving.

Group 3

1. We have the means but we aren't doing it. It would be a challenge and take organization but is possible.

Group 4

1. Define: the areas of children's ministries – purpose – plan
2. Youth group.
3. 7th-8th grade years of Confirmation (can't read by this is the group that suggested moving Confirmation out of CF hour)
4. Curriculum scope and sequence.

Group 5

1. Lots of youth activities in the summer when they're available.
2. Jr/Sr High meet on same night.
3. Youth meet on weekend night. Friday night social, seeker oriented; Sunday night – teaching.
4. Youth pastor involved in schools.
5. Personal contact of pastor to students.
6. Parents helping and supporting.
7. Parents involved in planning, serving, attend concert (like Pulse). [We notice a big drop in student involvement from elementary to Ignite. Drops by half.]
8. Keep the advisory board – but make it more active.
9. Have youth committee/leaders to help with running youth meetings.
10. Have a youth missions trip, Bible School.

Group 6

1. KEEP
 - a. Going to CHIC.
 - b. Covenant Harbor.
 - c. Small groups – deep Biblical truth.
 - d. Confirmation.
 - e. Bible memorization.

2. START:
 - a. Deep Biblical truth.
 - b. Allow Sr. High to go to adult CF classes.
3. STOP:
 - a. Underestimating ability and desire to learn.
 - b. Distracting youth staff from youth.

Group 7

1. Have more discussion (more in-depth discussion where we can fully investigate, discuss, and guide our collective efforts (in the Bahamas on a beach).
2. Identify best practices that are currently working within our community. Both for Children's and Youth ministry.
3. Partner with other churches (i.e. Young Life) that we can join with to see greater returns.
4. Listing how the Youth and Children activities in the bulletin tie to the 5 missional goals, like we currently do with adult activities.

Group 8

1. [Previous questions] Give us a goal, give us a guide.
2. Teach about Christ and make aware of consequences to actions – addictions, past, what can trap them.
3. Meet all year (during summer) – with exceptions as time off.
4. Small groups is good – keep it up and expand. Use university students when appropriate.
5. Focus on ECC youth – youth leaders – youth is #1 priority, w/out other stuff, that might draw them away.
6. Emphasize 'evangelism' – e.g. bring a friend night. Focus on creativity and participation in Youth Group programming.
7. Make sure – gospel (Christian teaching) – is preeminent, in special events and usual mtg. times.
8. Work hard – be willing to prep/be creative/presentation.
9. Build a good TEAM of volunteers whose ministry is to serve with kids.
10. Build a practical vision of missions – SERVING – serve in real life – e.g. ECC, mission trips, CFRC, Haiti, etc.
11. Youth Ministry should have parent component – mtng., ed.
12. A reach out mindset.
13. Connect kids to church - /authentic – ministry
14. Involve kids in everything/music, ministry, prayer.

Group 9 [Zeimers: *italics*; group: regular type)

1. *Answer: It appears that students in grades 6-12 are being educated in CF, attending special youth meetings, and serving in Christian services as a group (VBS as an example of activities). Voids in programs:*
 - a. Establish parental expectations to encourage youth involvement. Parental involvement is critical.
 - b. *We should be providing opportunities for serving and fellowship activities on a regular basis for grades 1-5 (esp.) as well as 6-12.*
 - c. *We should increase leadership training for non-staff participants in the children's and youth ministries.*

- d. *We should assure individual counseling for both males and females as needed.*
- e. We need fundraisers that our youth take ownership in, that involve the congregation.
- f. Winter retreats at Covenant Harbor need to be reinstated and continue participation at CHIC.
- g. Budget should allow youth events that don't require an entry fee (Example: Rock the Lot was \$3, New Years Eve Party was \$10).
- h. Because of low numbers of nursery workers, it has been suggested that for every child who uses the nursery, their parents(s) should be required to serve in the nursery at least once (we know this increases Jeanne's training responsibilities).
- i. Find a way to get 4th and 5th graders involved in Scripture memory. They are no longer interested.

Group 10

1. Sunday School – large group assembly on Sunday morning.
2. Large group assembly during the week for each age group – especially Middle School and High School.
3. Service opportunities for all ages.
4. Scripture memory through CF classes
5. Training for teachers and youth leaders.
6. Share planning for youth leaders.
7. Youth counsel?
8. Youth participation.
9. Older kids investing in younger kids.
10. Purpose.
11. Get our kids involved in service – present service opportunities. (linked to #9)
12. Miller – external ministry; not ministry to ECC children.
13. Coordination between CF, children's church and possibly Children's message.

Group 11

1. Middle School CF hour too chaotic – improvement – prepared, equipped teachers and improved classroom atmosphere.
2. Refocus programming on discipleship of our children.
3. Increased, planned involvement of children and youth in internal and external ministries.
4. Youth leaders involved in CF and other youth programs for continuity.
5. Improve and/or provide training and accountability of youth leaders and communicate who they are.
6. Lead pastor/council oversight of activities and programming.
7. Offer parents/child/youth service opportunities.
8. Parent communication for improved openness.
9. Increased preparedness of events, programs that is clearly communicated.

Group 12

1. Keep providing service opportunities.
2. Need an overall plan. Build on a foundation.
3. More parental involvement; more opportunities for parents to get involved.
4. Student leadership needs to be encouraged and developed.

5. Evangelism should be student initiated.
6. Accountability. Opportunities [for example Leadership training] should be linked to involvement.

Staff Group

1. Be more purposeful.
2. Lack of cohesiveness – so many changes in the staff
3. Not good at promoting the youth programs.
4. Stronger small groups for youth. Hard to get in one.
5. Connection to the campus ministries – Senior in HS go to Campus Crusade.
6. Lacking accountability of youth ministries.