

Youth Leader Spotlight:
-Sarah Clinton

I began to work with the senior high girls on Sundays and Wednesdays this past school year. Before I started, I hadn't really thought about working in Student Ministry before. This might have just been because my kids weren't that old yet. Since starting, though, I've found this ministry to be both meaningful and significant. It has been cool to see what Mark, Aaron, and all of the other leaders are doing with the youth at church! I have learned so many things myself from all their teaching and love to see the kids coming each week, excited to see one another and also excited to learn.

As a youth leader, my main function is to be there for the students if they need someone to listen or be a friend. I also pray for them during the week and just have fun with them. While the time commitment is draining, I think the reward of knowing these girls who are so smart and out there with their faith and love for Jesus is amazing. I also love being treated as "one of the group."

So many people are worried about getting involved with a ministry to young people, whether in diapers or high school, and hesitate because they think they lack skill or can't connect with the kids. They need to remember that

kids are so forgiving. They don't notice our lack of skills or when we don't say the right thing—they appreciate the time we give them. Every time I leave from our youth group, I feel energized and so glad that I have been a part of it! I think I probably learn more than the kids do!

Student Ministry is vital because it creates a wonderful and safe place for our Christian kids to hang out and be with friends. It also gives our kids a place to bring their non-Christian friends to see that we are very normal...and that we can have lots of fun. Part of this comes from our retreats and missions trips. While some of the things we do on those trips may be similar to things the Boy or Girl Scouts do, we include so much more! We have amazing bands and speakers. We have awesome times in God's Word. We take communion together. The fact that we can all be together for so many days makes it easier to get serious with the kids and dig deeper into God's Word.

Please continue to pray that our ministry will impact each and every one of the kids we work with. And to my senior high girls...cling to your faith in Jesus, no matter what temptations come your way.

First Free Church
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Firstword

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Followers of Christ

Jesus came to save the world and for that He died. But on His way to the cross, He focused on making some disciples. Jesus taught these men what it meant to follow Him. And then He modeled how to reproduce this "followership" in others.

Near the end of his life, Jesus gave His disciples and us the command to "make disciples of all nations." This is the core of what we as a church are called to do. That is why our theme at First Evangelical Free Church for this year of 2009 is "Growing as Followers of Christ."

I find it interesting that Jesus did not say in His Great Commission to "make converts" or "make believers" or "make Christians." While every true believer is a follower of Christ, when Jesus said, "make disciples," He meant more than just introducing people to Christ. Believers were to be baptized, openly identifying with Christ, and then taught to "obey" all that is commanded.

Obedience requires a disciplined effort. 1 Timothy 4:7 says, "Train yourself to be godly." The Greek word for "train" is the word we use today for "gymnastics." You and I both know that to be skilled in gymnastics requires hours of training and loads of hard work. Likewise, the only route to godliness is through discipline.

1 Corinthians 9:25 says, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

If you and I are going to grow as followers of Christ this next year, each of us will have to make a commitment to go into strict training.

So as we begin 2009, let me ask four questions:

- How are you doing in your discipline of Bible reading?

JI Packer once said, "If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop people from digging into the Bible. Knowing that it is the Word of God which teaches men to know and love and serve the God of the Word, I would do all that I could to surround them with the spiritual equivalent of pits, thorn hedges and man traps to frighten people off."

- How are you doing in your discipline of prayer time?

- How are you doing in your discipline of fellowship with other believers?

- How are you doing in your discipline of financial giving?

Let me remind you that these spiritual disciplines are only tools. They are not the end in themselves. They are the apparatus for us to grow as followers of Jesus Christ.

~ Pastor Joel

January Sermon Topics

- January 4 – An Identity for 2009 – Matthew 4:18-22
- January 11 – Facing Temptations I – Matthew 4:1-11
- January 18 – Facing Temptations II – Matthew 4:1-11
- January 25 – Facing Temptations III – Matthew 4:1-11

We exist to
BRING people
into a relationship
with Jesus

CONNECT them
to God's family

MATURE them
in their faith

EQUIP them
for ministry

so that God's name
is EXALTED

Youth Ministry: A Definition

- Mark Meyers

Often when people think of a youth group or a student ministry they think of playing games, having fun, camp, and Sunday school with no purpose in mind for these specific activities. While these are pieces of a student ministry, they are just that—pieces. They are not the whole, only parts of a bigger picture, all of which have a greater purpose in mind.

The main thrust of everything we do is to create a community that encourages faith to form, develop, and flourish. We strive to be a community where students can check out Christianity, ask questions, seek truth, and figure out what they believe and why. We give many opportunities to help students develop their faith through teachings, discussion, retreats, service projects—all in an attempt to offer them a taste of what a missional life looks like and how this can be achieved every day.

In our goal to be this community we do have fun, we do go to camp and on retreats, and we do have Sunday school. All of these things are done with the purpose and goal of making disciples who will in turn make disciples. We don't want to waste the time or resources of students and families. We would rather partner with families to develop our youth into individuals who will live their faith out in real impactful ways every single day.

SAVE THE DATES

February Outreach Weekend February 7 and 8
"Unreached People Groups In Your Neighborhood"

Saturday February 7

Delicious Pancake and Sausage Breakfast and Exciting Panel Discussion (Youth and older kids encouraged to come, childcare available if needed)

Panel Participants :

- New Life Family Services -- Therese Douglass - Ministry to post abortive women, crisis pregnancies, single parents, and adoption.
- World Relief Ministry to Somalis-- Sheri Mohammed, leader of "Rajo" (Somali for Hope), and Mike Neterer, leader of Somali Adult Literacy Training - SALT.
- Outpost Ministries -- Dan Puumala - Ministry to the sexually broken.

Sunday, February 8

Therese, Sheri, Mike, and Dan will teach ABFs both first and second hour.

Sunday Services will also feature a special outreach speaker.

Youth Interviews:

Q: What was the most significant youth group event for you this past year?
How was it significant?

Connor Peterson — Grade 9
"Feed my starving children because it wasn't an ordinary event. It actually felt good doing something for God like that."



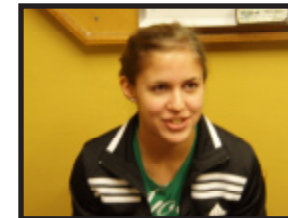
Alex Clinton — Grade 8
"Fall Retreat, because it's fun, it's a retreat, we get to learn more about God, and we get to be in fellowship throughout the whole weekend."



Will Klenk — Grade 9
"Fall Retreat because it was really fun to get to know new people who had just arrived in youth group, and it really did have a good impact on my life...and it was just awesome."



Alicia Symington — Grade 10
"New Years Eve Bash because there were a lot of people all celebrating the same exact thing."



Crown Financial Workshop

The **Crown Biblical Financial Study** is changing the way people handle their money.

Topics include: getting out of debt, giving, saving, and investing. **Sign up now through Jan. 4th. Class orientation will be on Jan. 1th, and classes will be every Wed. From Jan. 21st thru March 25, 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Contact Tim Audette for more information or to sign up by calling 952-893-0681 or by e-mail at tbaudette@earthlink.net.**

Clubs and
Youth Group will
kick off again
January 14th!

New Small Groups will kick off in January. Contact Jennifer Bartle at jenn.bartle@gmail.com if you are interested in joining one.

BECOME A MEMBER!

CLASS 101:
EXPLORING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
IS JANUARY 25TH FROM 4-8 PM.

Fresh Encounter

January 21st

6:30-8 PM

SNOW EMERGENCY INFO. LOCATIONS:

WHEN THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL...
CHURCH ACTIVITY CANCELLATIONS CAN BE FOUND:
O ONLINE AT WWW.FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG
O CALL CHURCH OFFICE AT 612.827.4705
O LISTEN TO KTIS RADIO
O IF YOU'RE ON A CHURCH EMAIL LIST (NEWS, ABFS, ETC.)...
CHECK YOUR INBOX!