

Youth Newsletter

June 2005

Youth, Leaders Prepare for End of 2004-2005 Youth Group Season

Over the past two months, the youth groups have been busy preparing for the end of an active and highly successful youth group season.

On Sunday, April 10, special Youth Revival activities brought nearly 100 youth, parents, and leaders to Bethlehem Christian Church, including over 30 from other churches and the community.

While the younger children were treated to a special big screen showing of the new VeggieTales DVD "Duke and the Great Pie War", the junior and senior high youth welcomed local Christian bands twenty4seven and Days Difference to Graham Hall for a special Youth Concert.

Through the months of April and May, leaders worked hard to finish up their lesson plans and cover a few final subject areas. During this time, the Scooter club received a very informative and inspiring presentation on the topic of missions from Melva West, who had just recently returned from a trip to Cambodia with Operation Smile.

Then, on Sunday, May 22, several fellowship and mission activities helped to bring the youth group season to a close.

That afternoon, the senior high youth gathered at the home of their leader, Becke West, for a Hawaiian-themed luau, with plenty of food and fun for all. After a special presentation to the group's three graduating seniors, Amanda Crumpler, John Driver, and Steven Morean, the group enjoyed a dinner of beef, pork, and chicken, complete with macaroni and pasta salads, fruit and vegetable trays, tea, and desserts.

On that same evening, the Voyagers, Pathfinders,

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULES

ALL GROUPS

- June 5** Youth Group Cook-Out, 3:00pm-7:30pm
Bennett's Creek Park, Shelter #3
- August 28** Opening Activity, time and details TBA

For more detailed information about your group's schedule, please contact your group's leaders.

and Alphas joined together to visit residents at two of the area's nursing homes. The group rode the church bus first to Autumn Care, then to Lake Prince, delivering hand-made crafts and visiting with the residents. The children even staged an impromptu chorale performance at the request of several Autumn Care residents. The group then made a special stop at Sonic for treats before returning to church.

The 2004-2005 youth group season will officially end with the Youth Group Cook-Out on Sunday, June 5, from 3:00pm until 7:30pm at Bennett's Creek Park. Food and drinks will be provided, and there will be plenty of fun and games for everyone. Be sure to bring your softball glove and fishing pole—we hope to see you there!



Nursing Home Visit

Sunday, May 22



Youth Director's Corner
by David Salerno

As the end of another youth group season looms on the horizon, those familiar emotions once again come back to me. And, after 12 years of youth ministry, you'd think I would be ready for them, but each year, they seem to arrive earlier and hit harder than the year before.

If you have never been a leader or teacher of children, it's hard to explain the emotion highs and lows that come with the end of a youth group season. In many ways, it's akin to watching your child get on the school bus on his first day of kindergarten, or helping to pack your teen's car as they prepare to drive off to college. You stand there with a deep sense of sadness of what is no longer, yet with a swelling pride of what has been accomplished, and what is yet to come.

Such was the scene at the home of Becke West at last Sunday's luau as, one by one, she addressed each of the three graduating seniors for the last time as Omega youth group members. She thanked them for their participation, praised them for the mature Christian young adults they have become, and encouraged them on the road they are about to travel.

Two of these graduating seniors will likely remain right here in our community, while another will travel a great distance to a brand new life and an exciting new experience.

As youth leaders, we work hard to plan our lessons, our fellowship activities, and our mission projects, in order to help our children and youth learn about Jesus and put their faith into action as part of a community of fellow believers.

But, in the end, the most that we can truly hope for is that we have had some positive influence on their lives, and that we have been a support to their families in their nurture and guidance.

The fact is, years from now, they will not remember the exact words we used while delivering our devotions, their bowling score the last time we went to Armory Lanes, or the exact amount of money they raised for World Vision.

What they will remember, though, is that they had leaders who truly cared about them and helped them grow. They'll remember the incredible feeling that comes from doing something good for others, and the impact it had on their lives. They'll remember the sense of community and belonging, and the friends that helped and supported them as they grew together in Christ.

That's relational ministry in action. It's youth ministry for the "long haul", that will encourage these graduating seniors to remain involved in church, to become involved in church leadership, and, eventually, to raise their own families and children in the church.

Every year, it is difficult to say goodbye to those who graduate from our youth fellowship program. But, it's made easier by seeing how they have grown, both physically and spiritually, and knowing that, one day, we will be leading and teaching their children.

Of course, I never dreamt I'd be saying something like "I taught your dad when he was in youth group", but that's a topic for an entirely different article...

Until next month, God bless,