

Philosophy of Youth Ministry

Grace Community Church

The mission of the Church as a whole is twofold: First to edify and strengthen believers in their faith, as they continue in their life of discipleship. Second, the Church is to proclaim the gospel, call people to faith and repentance, and evangelize a world desperately in need of redemption. This mission at Grace Community Church is well summarized by four simple words: Love Jesus, Love Others. This twofold mission of the Church therefore must be the mission of any ministry within the Church. While the methods and means may look different, edifying believers and proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers is the purpose of Youth Ministry.

Mission Statement: We exist to edify and equip students to become fully devoted disciples of Christ.

Vision Statement: To produce young adults who, through their knowledge and fellowship with God, reorient their entire life around Christ.

How we are to fulfill our mission and vision:

Parents

The most vital aspect of any youth ministry is parents who are devoted to raising up their children to fear the Lord and walk in His ways (Deut. 5-6). The primary responsibility to teach and raise up children to love the Lord and follow his commands falls on the parents, and the familial structure is first and foremost the place God has designed to strengthen youth (Deut. 11:19, Prov. 22:6, Eph. 6:4). The Church is to come alongside as a secondary, yet incredibly important body of people, devoted to the same goal.

Teaching

The preaching of the Word and Gospel must never become secondary to games, crafts, etc. Games, crafts and other similar activities certainly have their place in youth ministry, but the goal must never be to simply have fun. On the other end of the spectrum, we hope to never let our students down by handling the Word of God with boredom. The Gospel and the Word of God are the most incredible truths of the world and must be communicated in that manner. The most significant thing we could give a student is a sound understanding of the Bible. The Bible tells them who God is, who they are, the meaning of life, and the way to live.

Discipleship

Our foundation for discipleship comes from 1 John 1:3: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Discipleship ought to cement the truths of the gospel in the minds, hearts, and hands of students. Preaching is incredibly important, and must be done well, but preaching without discipleship is an incomplete activity. Personal discipleship is to be the foundation for Sunday/Wednesday youth nights, where an environment of openness, vulnerability, relational depth, and love for one another is set up by leaders pouring into students outside of weekly meetings.

Small Groups

Small Groups are a vital aspect of churches, as believers are able to engage one another on deeper levels spiritually, and relationally. As such, small groups ought to be a vital aspect of our youth ministry, where students are able to experience the fellowship of believers, engage deeper in topics pertinent to the Christian life, and begin to develop lasting friendships centered around Christ. This also helps adjust students to life after youth group, giving them a taste of what it means to be in a small group as an adult.

Trips

Retreats and Mission Trips are keystone moments in the life of a young Christian. Often times they are the moments that students look back on as the most tangible areas of growth in their life. After many conversations with students or adults who have gone through a youth program, these trips are often the clearest pictures where they can see God working in their life, and they act as a launching pad for students to continue in a life of discipleship. These trips also provide students with an ability to act out their duty as Christians to proclaim the gospel to the lost around the world, and participate in the twofold mission of the Church.

Healthy Balance

It is important to note that each of these functions of a youth ministry helps accomplish its mission and must be given importance and value. A youth ministry which focuses too much on mission trips and preaching is missing out on the horizontal aspect of discipleship and small groups which give clarity and depth to a youth group. A youth ministry which focuses too much on games/crafts and small groups is missing out on the Word which has the power to transform lives, and mission trips which allow students to serve and participate in their duty to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each of these five functions must be given importance and emphasis, and at Grace Community Church we hope that each student is able to experience a healthy balance of these five elements.