

**1ST SAINTFIELD
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**YOUTH
& CHILDRENS
MINISTRY**



MINISTRY STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2015

YOUTH MINISTRY is an integral part of the life of our congregation. We have been blessed with the opportunity to equip, edify and encourage the next generation of Christians. The Apostle Paul exemplifies this when he reflects on how he served the newly established church of Thessalonica. He states:

“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well... For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8, 11-12)

As a church family, it is our privilege to share the Gospel and our lives with the young people entrusted to us by God. There have been a few changes made to youth ministry over the last month and hopefully this will help explain the changes and the reasons behind them.

When it comes to the young people of our church and community, our highest goal and mission is to see young people mature as faithful disciples of Christ. This is our great commission given by Christ, *“Go, and make disciples...”* (Matthew 28:19). In order to achieve this, it is helpful to identify three markers of our youth ministry programmes. By identifying the purpose and goal of any ministry programme, we can be more effective in serving our young people as they grow in grace through our ministry programmes and integrate as servants of Christ within the body of the congregation.

TO SEE **YOUNG PEOPLE**
MATURE
AS FAITHFUL
DISCIPLES
OF **CHRIST**

The three markers are as follows:



1. BRING IN



2. BUILD UP



3. SEND OUT



The 'BRING IN' programmes/events are opportunities to share the gospel with the unchurched. It is a chance for young people to **discover God** for the first time. It is attractional-based ministry that draws people in. In 1st Saintfield, this includes ministries such as *The Element Youth Club*, *Boy's Brigade* and *Girl's Brigade*. These are our outreach opportunities to our community. We are able to open our doors to young people to use our facilities for a variety of reasons (i.e. football, gaming consoles, Duke of Ed., etc.). We can then build relationships with them over the weeks, and share the gospel with them, introducing them to the Living God through conversations, epilogues and devotions. BRING IN programmes are best suited to reach those with no affiliation or interest in conventional church. We offer a safe environment and provide excellent opportunities for our own young people to invite their friends along to, as part of their personal evangelism. Often times these programmes are the first step for young people in their relationship with God.



The 'BUILD UP' programmes are the ministries that cultivate and develop the spiritual life of a young Christian. This is where our young people come to grips with being a teenage Christian, living out their faith and growing in grace. It is programmes such as these where young people learn to **desire God**. The ministry of *Teen Track*, *Elevate*, *GB Scripture Class* and *BB Bible Class* are entry points for young people in spiritual formation. Discipleship programmes like these are where young Christians learn the skills of devotional Bible reading, prayer and pursuing holiness. Corporate worship with the body of Christ on a Sunday is also instrumental in the healthy growth of a young Christian, worshipping God alongside those at different stages in life, with different backgrounds, and different experiences. The call of the church is to be one body, and young people are to be welcomed and encouraged into it. We want to see young people built up in their walk with Jesus, with a faith that will stay with them their whole life.



The final marker of our youth ministry is 'SEND OUT'. And in one sense it is the fruit of the labour. This section could be split in two, (1) serving the local church and (2) serving the global church. In terms of the local church, this means providing the opportunity for the active participation and service of young people in their congregation. Serving in children's ministry, the praise team, stewardship, or on the tech team is their opportunities to **display God** to the local church, local community and the world around them. This allows young people to discover the gifts and talents God has given them, creates facilities for them to be trained in areas for ministry and the flexibility to try different things. As in any new venture, young people will required the love and support, encouragement and expertise, time and energy in order for them to discover where they are called to serve. Looking beyond the local church; short term mission trips, summer camps, and PCI teams are great opportunities for young people to step out of their comfort zones, achieve new skills, grow in maturity and gain a deeper understanding and passion for the global church beyond their home. This will help cultivate a deep love for God's people internationally, God's mission historically and God's heart evangelically.

With these three markers in our youth ministry, we can be more intentional in our shepherding of our young people, see them grow as young disciples and help them where they are struggling. It enables us to keep our focus more direct and aids us to serving them better.



SO WHAT'S CHANGED, AND WHY?

The biggest change is to **ELEVATE**. Elevate has moved from a Saturday evening to a Sunday evening. Elevate is the youth ministry's youth fellowship programme and is an important part of the 'Build Up' portion of the youth ministry. It is a fantastic opportunity for our young people to receive age-appropriate teaching, getting them to handle the Bible and discuss its teaching in small groups. It is a chance for the young people to tackle the issues that face teenage Christians in our day and age. It begins, every other week, after the evening service on a Sunday night with fun and games and finishes with a light supper. By running this programme immediately after the evening service, this will encourage young people to attend evening service to worship God together with the body of believers. By cultivating the habits of regular church attendance in the corporate worship of God with the congregation, we are setting norms that will remain with the young people long after they finish with youth ministry. It also gives us a great opportunity to invite young people on a Friday night to Elevate (who would often be reluctant or uncomfortable coming to a church service) where they will witness the normal patterns of young people coming out of church together. This move to Sunday night is a trial period that will finish at the start of the summer and be reviewed by the young people and leaders of Elevate.

Another change will be a monthly social night, either off-site (i.e., 10 bowling, cinema, go-karting, etc.) or at the church (i.e., takeaway, movie night, etc.). These will be opportunity for the young people to develop relationships with one another and their leaders. These will also provide opportunities for the young people in personal evangelism, to invite friends along to. We also intend to run special activities over Easter and the summer.

The other big change is to **TEEN TRACK**. Teen Track is the young people's breakfast Bible study that meets before morning worship on Sundays. Teen Track has moved to an alternate week format, complementing Elevate, from now until Easter. This is so the young people can adjust to the changes made to *Elevate* without overwhelming their Sunday experiences. This will be reviewed at Easter by the young people whether to return to a weekly programme (with Elevate still alternating on Sunday evenings), or not.



Another change to Teen Track that is taking place is to see more people from the congregation make breakfast for the young people. This will provide the young people an opportunity to receive service from many different generations and people of the church family. This is a wonderful chance particularly for those who are not involved in youth ministry (or feel unsuited to youth ministry) to come in and serve the young people. No teaching is required, no leading small groups, just providing food and chatting in the kitchen. At Teen Track the young people eat together and then study God's Word together and pray. The passion of the young people for both Elevate and Teen Track is incredibly encouraging and displays a great love for God and His Word.

The reason for the changes is to see young people integrated into the congregational life of the church. It's important that they see 1st Saintfield as their spiritual family, that they feel part of the church and not on the fringes of it, that they receive the blessings of the family of God's people. By having these two programmes bookending Sunday worship services, it will allow the young people to witness faithful Christians from all walks of life, at different stages of life.