



2016 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

PARENT'S CAMP CONNECTION

EVERY ONE
THING
DAY
WHERE
LIVING ON MISSION

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Our theme this summer is “Every...One, Thing, Day, Where: Living on Mission.” Our desire is for all to know that God’s plan determines how everyone lives out their faith every day, with everything of who they are and everywhere they go.

Our life is a story. We are an actor in that story. But we are not the center of that story. Our story is part of a bigger story – God’s story. That big story of God’s is called the metanarrative. How we see ourselves and see God is defined by how we see Scripture.

The Bible isn’t just words about God. The Bible is God’s Word to us. In 2 Timothy 3:16, it says that Scripture is “God-breathed,” which describes the power and nature of Scripture as God’s Word. The Bible is made up of 66 books that are all about God. It’s powerful, authoritative, life-giving and good.

God created everything by the power of His command. As the Creator, He has absolute authority and knows what’s best for our happiness. Human history has been a constant pattern of turning away from God’s loving authority and seeking happiness apart from Him. But the Bible tells the story of how God calls broken people back to abundant life through faith in Jesus Christ.

The way teens behave comes from something. Their attitudes and actions spring from their value system, and their value system is based on what they believe. Glen Schultz puts it this way: “At the foundation of a person’s life, we find his beliefs. These beliefs shape his values, and his values drive his actions.”

As parents, we want our children to do the right thing, to live good lives, be kind and be successful to name a few of our desires for our children. As believers in Christ, we want them to know God’s Word as the guidebook to their lives.

Too often, we teach the Bible as a series of isolated morality tales, like Aesop’s Fables. We want our children to learn how to live well, so we draw from the Bible stories of people who did the right thing and those who did the wrong thing. We want them to understand that good is of God, leading to success, and bad is of Satan, leading to failure. We think they have grasped the gospel if they can retell the stories from the Bible.

During my first years in directing the youth week camps at Caswell, one middle school guy came and expressed some confusion at the story of David we had depicted in the drama that morning during worship. He said he had been told the story of David and Goliath all his life. He knew that David was a teenager with so much courage to stand up to that giant, Goliath. But he said that in the drama that morning, we said the same David became a king, and the same David had an affair with someone else’s wife, named Bathsheba! Those were different guys, he said, just with the same name of David. There was no way all those guys named David were just one guy.

Churches have told children tons of good stories, but have we made sure that they understand how the stories are connected? Have we only been sharing the Bible as if it were just a collection of stories and not told them the big picture of God's plan? The Bible may appear to be just a collection of random stories. On a higher level, though, a unity appears. What is God trying to say through all the individual stories and events recorded?

This is where the word "metanarrative" comes into importance. At its simplest, the word represents a "big story," or a comprehensive explanation of many little stories. The metanarrative of the Bible is its story of the self-revelation of God to the world.

Christianity teaches that the self-revelation of God to the world reached a culmination in the incarnation, when the "Word became flesh."

The biblical scholar, F. F. Bruce argued:

"... the Christian gospel ... tells how for the world's redemption, God entered into history, the eternal came into time, the Kingdom of Heaven invaded the realm of earth, in the great events of the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. "

(F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*)

Jesus himself also believed in a biblical metanarrative. In Mark 1:15 He announces: "The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." In saying this, He indicates that God had a plan through history. The Kingdom of God has finally arrived, and Jesus sees Himself as the fulfillment of this plan.

Think about it this way.

There's this huge story with basically four major acts. Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. God has given us His Word that tells the story of His grand and awesome plan, from the first verse to the last. The gospel is about what God is doing. If we just take the Bible in isolated parts or stories, we miss the wholeness of God. The gospel is not just a group of ideas, but rather a plan that has been designed and implemented by a loving God for the saving of humans.

God's plan is personal. The plan runs the length of Scripture. When we take the Bible as a series of isolated morality tales, we think about 66 books with hundreds of stories contained within them. We teach there is an Old Testament before Jesus came to earth and then the New Testament when Jesus arrived in the form of a baby. In actuality, there are not hundreds of stories. There are not 66 stories. There aren't even two stories with the Old and New Testament. There is one story, and that is the story of what God is doing to redeem history.

This generation has been taught the morals of the Bible apart from the redemption story of God, the Creator of all things. The predominant religion of our culture today is called **moralistic therapeutic deism**, which was made popular by Christian Smith, in his book, "Soul Searching."

Moralism is the idea that whatever god is out there, he wants you to be a good person. It's also therapeutic by making you a better person. Research has shown that being spiritual is good for you and your health. And deism is merely the belief in some god doing something up/out there. Almost like a divine butler that helps you when you need him, but then disappears when you don't. This generation often draws their theology from various sources, including the Bible. But they pick Bible stories that work well with their worldview and adopt the morality found in the story. This will make them feel better and pleasing to God.

The truth of the gospel is that sinners have been saved and are part of a family of believers who edify and equip one another to go out to other sinners and tell them about the Savior. Scripture tells us how God has been

searching for and saving people from the first garden found in Genesis, to the eternal city, discussed in Revelation. We have the privilege of telling that to others, including our children.

We know that parents are the biggest influencers in a teenager's life as well as the fact that teens adopt the faith of their parents. But our concern is that as parents, we do not realize how important it is to share the whole gospel.

Therefore this summer, we want to introduce that holistic approach to God's story.

So, consider how the metanarrative of creation-fall-redemption-restoration acts as the big story that guides and informs all the small stories. We can look down on the Bible's landscape and note that the creation story is introduced in Genesis 1–2: God creates all things for His glory in an orderly manner. He creates man in his image. The fall is introduced in Genesis 3: Man tries to usurp God's authority, relationship with God is broken, the world is fractured. The theme of redemption is introduced immediately in Genesis 3:15, with the promise of salvation. In the rest of Genesis and Exodus, the plan for redemption takes the shape of a people chosen by God — the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel. The theme of redemption is explored throughout the rest of the Old Testament from various angles, ultimately pointing toward the perfect redemptive work of Christ on the cross retold to us in the gospels. The New Testament reinforces and expands our understanding of redemption, assuring us that salvation has been accomplished, urging us to pursue sanctification, which is the reciprocation of our love toward Jesus and encouraging us to hope in a future glorification. Glorification is the ultimate reward that we'll receive when Jesus returns: We'll be like Christ. In Revelation, we see the restoration of order to the cosmos: God reestablishes perfect order with the creation of a new Heaven and new earth.

Back to the middle school guy and his confusion that David was the same person in all three stories. He couldn't understand how David, who had enough courage to kill Goliath, would later be king but then make a poor choice to have an affair with another man's wife. When I told him that he also had the other man killed but was still referred to in the Bible as a man after God's own heart, he really was perplexed.

I explained to him that God created us all in His image, but when the fall came, that image was broken for us all. In our sinfulness that followed the fall, we would all give way to being our own god, causing us to be separated from the real God forever. But in the Bible, we could see the bigger picture of God trying to make things right again, from the sacrificial system in the Old Testament to Jesus being the one true sacrifice for all people for all time. His conquering death and being resurrected back to life paid the way for us to be made right in God's eyes as we surrender our will to be our own god back to the only one who can forgive sins and make us whole again, Jesus Christ. Through that belief, we would forever be with God. We won't be perfect, but God looks at the condition of our heart to see if we truly are following Him.

We understand then, that what we believe really matters. Our following Jesus and His example through God's Word, the Bible, gives us all a guide to live by. And a desire to share how God has changed our lives with others gives a new perspective on who we are and the purpose of our lives.

God has a life-changing plan for you and me. He's not finished telling His story of changing the world, and now He's doing it through your life. But the best part is that He's not asking you to do great things for Him; He's inviting you to do great things with Him. He's giving you everything you need. He is everything you need. He gives you strength and power, enabling you to experience a bigger and better story.

HERE IS WHAT YOUR TEENAGERS ARE LEARNING EACH DAY AT CAMP:

Our theme: Every...One, Thing, Day, Where; Living on Mission.

Theme Verse: 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

Purpose: To emphasize the importance of showing that the Bible is a bigger story — God’s plan for restoration and redemption — and YOU fit into that story.

Overall Reflections:

- helping kids to know that the Bible is real
- bridging the value of Scripture with the metanarrative and their personal life
- helping them to start thinking “bigger than them, bigger than us”
- for the kids to pick up on the fact that this life is more about Him than about me
- how does “my life story” fit into His life story?
- that the Bible is not a bunch of random stories — reiterating that (even their week at Caswell is not just a random moment)

SMALL GROUP OVERVIEW

Tuesday — God’s big picture, everyone

Purpose: To help students see that the Bible is not a random collection of stories, but God’s big story.

Scripture: Genesis 2:4-25; 3:1-19; 6:5-7; Isaiah 6:1-4; John 3:16; Colossians 1:15-23; 1 John 5:1-4; Revelation 21:1-5; 1 Peter 2:9

One of the reasons we do not read the Bible well is that we see it as a bunch of random stories. But there is a common thread that runs through the whole Bible. There is a larger story of God and His plan for us that resounds through the entire Bible. We call this the biblical metanarrative.

There are many big themes that carry through the Bible. Today we are going to focus on four themes that together tell the story of the Bible in a nutshell – Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration.

Wednesday — Free to be me, everything about me is found in Jesus

Purpose: To help students understand that true identity is found in Jesus Christ. This study will help students evaluate the false voices around them that distort their true value and true self and will also help students respond to truth by trusting in God’s Word rather than in false voices.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4-7 and many others.

Thursday — It’s what you do every day

Purpose: To help students examine their lifestyles to see if they show Jesus to others and allow Him to show off through them.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9, Luke 10:25-37, other selected passages

Lifestyle — how does my life make Jesus famous? Do everything in the name of Jesus. How can you be and do what you are called to in Jesus’ Name?

Friday — Share God’s Story Everywhere

Purpose: To help students develop a strategy and plan to share Jesus with others as requested in Acts 1:8.

Scripture: Acts 1:8

Friday — tell — witness, share, go to campus clubs, do missions in your area (one to five miles around your church.) Think about how to pray for ministry around your church. Local project — like Change This World, where we are packaging meals at camp. It can be global — offering money from this week pays for food that reaches people in Haiti.

SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK TO GET THEM TALKING ABOUT THEIR WEEK:

- What was the theme?
- How does learning about you being created in the image of God make you feel about yourself? Does that change how you interact with others?
- In what ways is Christianity not just about going to Heaven when you die, but also about following Jesus into a bigger story now?
- Did you play any games or take any special classes?
- What about Change This World? Which day did you all help fill the food bags? What did this experience mean to you? Was the offering met to pay for the food?
- Any dramas on stage that really got your attention? If so, which ones?
- What about the music? Any song you really liked? Did any of the lyrics of a song make you stop and think? (Everyone at camp is given a free download of the music CD that the BeDoTell band produces for the summer. Ask them to let you hear some of the songs — at least to hear the one they liked the most.)
- What about the main speaker? Which sermon was your favorite?
- What one thing do you think God was asking you to change as a result of this week?
- Offer to pray with your teen about that change, asking God for strength for them to keep the commitments they have made.

If your teen has made a first time profession of faith in Jesus, they should have gotten a book entitled “New” to help them with that new commitment. Ask if you as a family can walk through the book together, or think of other ways that you could encourage your son or daughter with their commitment to Jesus. Jesus was baptized, and we as believers follow up with our professions of faith as an outward sign of the inward change that Jesus brings. This is one of our Baptist ordinances, and it allows the congregation at the church to celebrate this decision as well as to pray for your teen as they continue to grow in their faith and knowledge of who God is and what this decision means. The best part is that by placing their trust in what Jesus did, His sacrifice on the cross, His death and His resurrection pay the debt for our sin and restore us to a new relationship with God, one where we can enter His presence anytime with prayer, reading His Word and listening. Not only does that bring peace in the midst of the things this world brings us, but it provides a way to be with God for all eternity. Your Teen learned about a new app called “The Story,” and it tracks as they share the gospel through social media.

If your teen made a public recommitment to Jesus, there is also a book entitled “Next” to help understand more of their commitment to follow Jesus. This may also be a book your family can walk through together.

If your teenager feels God is calling them into ministry, they would have been given a CD for their computer called “Discovery” that will provide opportunity for them to discover more of what being called into full-time ministry means.

Continuing the Journey

**There are 30 quiet times in the back of the student workbook. Encourage your teenager to keep having that even when they get home.

Our prayer is that God has shown them how His plan for them is part of the bigger story of redemption for all. May you use this experience in the life of your teenager to strengthen their spiritual growth as well as to provide ways for you and your family to grow together each week as you look for ways to connect your family to the love of God by studying God’s big story, the Bible, together.