

# One Purpose Student Ministries

## Newsletter

### November 2009

## Connect: Sr. High Sunday School Re-modeled

**Sunday School Remodeled, Result: Over 55 students connected and engaged in spiritual conversations.**

The days of boring lectures and low attended Sunday School classes are over for One Purpose Student Ministries. One Purpose Student Ministries has remodeled the idea of Sunday School, a typically unfriendly, boring, classroom based approach to a more relational and conversational approach to spiritual development

“When only 4 students are attending your class out of a youth ministry of approx. 40 Senior High students - it doesn't take a genius leader to figure out that something is wrong”, says Chet Carlson, the Youth director for One Purpose Student Ministries. OPSM first made changes to their Sunday School program two years ago when they shifted the location from classrooms at Peace Church to a local coffee shop. The very first Sunday they changed locations the attendance went from 4 to around 36. Over the past two years they have remodeled the idea of Sunday “School” in order to make the morning more conducive to students who are overwhelmed, tired and stressed out about school work, jobs, and friendships. “Teenagers live busy lives and are under a lot of pressure to perform academically and socially”, says Chet, “and if we fail to provide them with an outlet to relax and breathe, they are hardly ready to process another piece of information, let alone allow their lives to be transformed”.

The format of the morning is simple: connect, discuss a spiritual topic & scripture, and close in prayer. Each morning students arrive at 10:10 at Starbucks in Kowalski's (off of Diffley), purchase a beverage, sit at table of 4-6 other students and spend intentional time connecting and discussing a spiritual topic. Each group of 4-6 has a student leader who facilitates the conversation, with a guide for getting kids to open up, share about their life, read the scripture passage and talk about the topic.

“There are a few obstacles to this ministry”, says Chet. “Now that we have over 30 kids attending on a weekly basis, it's extremely important that we are focused on our objective—encouraging students to know & serve Jesus Christ and not on simply spending 40 minutes over coffee on unrelated topics”. One way this youth ministry keeps focus to the morning is by involving students in the process. Each week students are asked to facilitate a group the following week and are provided with an outline of the morning. Each student facilitator is asked to invite one other underclassmen to participate in leading the group. “Our goal is to create a culture where students show up expecting to have a spiritual conversation and grow closer to their peers, and closer to God”, says Chet.

OPSM liked the idea so much they decided to implement the same principles in their Jr. High ministry. A year after starting connect, the ministry began remodeling the Junior High Sunday school format to model the Senior High Connect. The format and approach is the same - connect, discuss a spiritual topic & scripture. But one key difference is that each week two, Senior High students are invited to help facilitate the conversation by sharing a brief testimony/experience from their Junior High faith journey, then facilitate a conversation about faith, their lives and the topic. Connect has been equally successful with the Junior High. Since the beginning of remodeling Junior High Connect, the attendance and involvement grew from approx. 6-12 students to 15-25.

-- Chet