OTFC

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“Where do I fit in the church?”

Broken into 2 sections; 1 directed towards the youth and 1 towards the youth leaders.

Section 1 Ice breaker game

Find someone that has your same name, plays the same video games you do, wears the same kind of shoe or likes the same band as you do. Someone from a different youth group.

Emphasize how it takes some work, some of them won’t find someone to pair up with. But it takes all those different interest and types to make the world awesome, eclectic and whole.

Section 1

Evan’s suggested verse/direction 1

Philippians 3:17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

Imitate Paul and watch the others that walk the same example. So we are to be followers of Christ and be like his students as well as watching over and discipling other people.

Evan’s suggested verse/direction 2

Timothy’s example and Paul’s letter to him about setting an example. This will help the youth understand that they can disciple and spread the gospel.

My thoughts, a bit basic but it’s a start

Section 1

Intro-Sharing how we got started into ministry and how we found our place. For example, I never dreamed of going into ministry. I happened into it by chasing the minister’s daughter. Despite being told I had a knack for it I kept running away in my own personal groundhog day-esque version of Jonah. Eventually it all worked out though and here I am 15 years in and still loving it. What sold me on it was I had the skill set and interest that lined up with this particular branch of the church. Ministry. There’s lots of different ways to be a part of the body of christ.

Which is laid out well in 1 Corinthians 12. (Paul speaking on 1 body but many parts, hand can’t say to the eye kind of thing)

The same is true for your place in the church or body of Christ. You may have the gift of music, for a while I used mine to play in bars with some buddies, not sure that’s was part of the original plan. I’m a bit slow at times. But we can take that gift you have for music and turn it into leading worship for the congregation, youth rallies, vbs or primary church. You can find other people that have that same talent and a love for Christ and pair those two together in a ministry. Maybe you love computers, personally I struggle remembering how to copy and paste sometimes. We need people like you to use your gift to step up and help with live streaming, IT issues, website development and design. You can go a step further and combine the 2, learn to operate the sound board. Do you have any idea how much of an impact a good sound tech can have on a service? They are invaluable.

If you’ve got a sense of humor, guess who needs to be in charge of the church sign? Like that sign that said “I’m all about that grace, bout that grace. No sinning”

If you love meeting new people, look into outreach ministries or being the greeter at the door. Making sure people feel welcomed. I can’t remember a name to save my life and there’s nothing more embarrassing than calling someone old enough to be your grandad “sport”.

We need to figure out what your talent is, this is where it gets tricky. You might not know yet and that’s ok. One of the best ways I’ve figured out to finding your talent or gift or place in the church is by trying them. You must be ok stepping out of your comfort zone so you can learn what you like and don’t like. How many of you know you don’t like a food but never tried it? You don’t really know till you try it. There’s a place just across the street at the mall called the melt. I’ve never been a fondue guy, but my wife wanted to go. And I can’t rightly say I don’t like it if I’ve never tried it. I learned the hard way that I don’t like it. Or rather it doesn’t like me. We weren’t even out of Columbus on the interstate before I was sick.

 So, we need to trust God and try to find our gift and place in the church. There’s a book called the cure for the common life, if you get the chance, read it. In it Max Lucado explains how we’re all brought into this world with our bags prepacked. Everything we need and it’s our job to sort through the bag and put things to use. If I were to hand you my tool bag, you’d be confused. Like wise if you handed me an oculus I’d be lost. It’s your job to figure out what’s your part to play. In 1 Peter 2:5 we are compared to living stones, being built into spiritual houses.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

So, work to find your talent or gift or place so that we can give glory to God with it.

1 Peter 4:11 if anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

To do this, you need to be like Peter willing to step out of the boat on faith. Yes you might sink, but then again you might find yourself walking on water.

My youngest boy is naturally good at music. I bought him a drum set, showed him some basic things and he took it further than I ever could. But now, it just sits in the closet collecting dust.

Once you find that place, go all in. Have you ever given a gift only to see the person never use it? It’s heartbreaking, in that same way God has given you a special gift. A job to do and a place to be. Why not make the most of it? Look back at Matthew 25:14-30 (just going to summarize) A man going on a trip calls in his servants. Gives one of them 5 talents, the next 2 and the last 1, 1 talent. First guy went to work, doubled his master’s money. Second guy also went to work. Earned an extra talent. But the last guy, he was scared. Buried it. His master wasn’t happy. Specifically, Jesus used the words “His master replied, ‘you wicked, lazy servant’”

We can’t waste the gift we’ve been given. Along with that don’t let fear keep you from pursing your place in the church. Hebrews 12:1-3 says therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders us (like fear, worry, judgement) and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

These talents and abilities to serve are not limited to just inside the church house. People are hurting all over the world. People are hurting right here in Ohio. People are in need right in your little town. According to feedingamerica.org 1,547,110 people face hunger in Ohio. Of them 448,600 are children. 1 in 8 people and 1 in 6 children are facing hunger. The latest numbers show that 10,655 Ohioans are homeless. If you look around the room, given the law of big numbers that means somewhere in your day to day lives is a young person facing hunger. Ohio also ranks as the 5th most state with adults suffering with serious mental illness at an estimated 459,000. We all felt the affects Covid 19, the isolation and the fear. This world is in desperate need of Christ’ love. And here we stand with an abundance of it. We can take these same skills and venture outside our doors to go serve. Whether it’s making meals for families, serving at a shelter or even being part of the prayer warriors that pray for the needs of your community. There are many, many ways for you to use your talents to lift up and honor God in our world. If you have a love for cooking, people are hungry, you’re great at organizing, set up workdays for people that are unable to take care of their yard. If you love to travel and experience new cultures, look into mission trips. If you’re not a people person that’s alright! We’ve got a place for you too! There’s a young lady in west unity that started a shoes and socks ministry called just for kicks. Put shoes and socks on the feet of thousands and thousands of people. There are many ways we can be that light on hill, letting everyone know exactly where they need to be headed. But we have to be willing to go first. If we look at the recounting of Jesus’ ministry, he went everywhere, places he was loved and places he was hated. He didn’t just stay indoors and keep ahold of what he knew. He stepped out and shared with all that would listen. This success lead to more success. To the point where many times when he was ministering, people would force their way in. Let’s look at some biblical examples

Matthew 4:23-25 news about Jesus’ preaching and healing had spread all over Syria and people came from all over.

Matthew 8:1-2 Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down from the mountain side.

Matthew 9:10-11 Jesus ate with the sinners and tax collectors

Mark 6,7,10

Luke 3, 4, 6

John 2, 4, 6

On and on the crowds followed Jesus, gathered around him. The same will happen for you, when we step out on faith and use our talents the way they were supposed to be used we will see the success come back to us.

I may not act like it but I’m old and not going to be around forever. At 35 I already can’t hear that well, my knees crack and my back aches. Ya’ll are the future of the church. Don’t let anyone or anything keep you from serving. People might say things like you’re too young, bull 1 timothy 4:12 says Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

People might try to tell you, you’re not the biggest, baddest or best. Who cares? Look who God used to save the Israelites. Moses, he murdered a guy, David, the youngest slayed Goliath. Joshua scared but still took on Jericho. It took how many signs before Gideon went with God’s plan to defeat the Midianites? Ehud, the left-handed assassin? God wants you.

In conclusion, there is a place that is perfect for you. Just like Paul’s example of the church being like a body. You may be an eye or ear, but every part is needed. You need to pray about it, be willing to step out of your comfort zone, set a good example and be sure that you are working for God so you can be successful and happy in the church. Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Section 2-Last 5 minutes or so. We can use this time to offer up suggestions and network with other leaders about things we’ve tried that’s worked or hasn’t worked. This isn’t real fleshed out just yet. Trying to find that balance between instructional and practical.

If you’re not old enough to remember the original Xbox this section ain’t for you. Or if the thought of a church lock in doesn’t makes you instantly angry or if you’ve never been tethered to the wall for the duration of a phone call, you can tune us out.

We have had a good success at 5th street, getting our youth group plugged in. Here’s the general outline of what we’ve tried that works.

1. We constantly encourage the youth group to imitate Christ servant attitude as best they can. Inside and outside the church. In school and sports. If they stay involved and busy they can better see the fruits of their labor.
2. Sometimes we gotta push them out of the nest. My son is great at being behind the scenes. But he never would have figured that out if I hadn’t signed him up for worship team.
3. Adapt, Using G as an example, he hated singing for the worship team, but he found out that he liked helping up in the sound booth and now runs sound and video for our services. If we have them try something and they don’t like it we keep searching for that fit.
4. Pray for them. Lay it at God’s feet and let him open the door and hearts. Pray for them to be strong, bold and willing to step up.
5. Set the example. I will not ask any of the students to do anything I won’t. That being said if it’s their first time doing a communion devotion I’ll be right there with them, helping them to rework things and do their best. I’ve found they’ll work as hard as I will.
6. Be reasonable, if you don’t have time to be at the church house 4-5-6-7 nights a week they don’t either. Start small and build up
7. Start young, once kids start progressing through our program we start plugging them in. For example when you hit 7th grade and there’s a need in primary school, you’re going to go help out. Or if you’re 3rd grade in junior church you’re going to be helping the 1st graders finding scriptures. This starts that mindset young.
8. Reward hard work. Encouragement is important. It’s easy for this extra work to go unnoticed. We have to be their cheerleaders.
9. Stay organized. In the hustle and bustle it’s easy to lose track of lesson plans, who’s where, keep it neat and tidy.
10. Surround yourself with good people, people that you can trust to also help mentor these young people. Back to G, I don’t know how our livestream service works but the guy that set it up is a genius. Our senior minister allows me to constantly bounce ideas off him, and he’s great about being honest with me. I don’t mind it when he tells me that’s a great idea or that’ll crash and burn.