



The Red Brick Church

Youth Ministry

Information Packet

2019-2020

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The Red Brick Church
Youth Activity Schedule

2019-2020

Activity Calendar

(#hosts, #sponsors needed)

August	
24 – Sat – Kick off Youth Activity (Water)	(1,2)
September	
15 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
?22 – SYATP Party – S’mores, songs and Prayer to plan SYATP	(1,1)
19 – Possible Wednesday Bible Study Begins (every week follows AWANA calendar)	
25 – Wed before school – See You At The Pole	
October	
6 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
?12 – Sat 4-7pm – Rhodes Cookout & College/military packages	(1,2)
20 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
27 – Sun – Around the Table with Seniors & Teens	(1,2-3)
November	
2 or 5? –Widow Yard or Church or Parsonage Clean-up OR Bread of Life 5 th ?	(1,1-3)
3 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
17 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
24 – Sun – JH Christmas Tree Decorating	(1,2)
December	
1 – Sun 4-6pm – JH Christmas Parties	(1,1)
1 – Sun 6-8pm – SH Christmas Parties	(1,1)
20 – Fri pm – Christmas Caroling to Widows	(2,3)
January	
17-20 – Winter Retreat	(1,3)
25 – Rescue Mission Food Service	(1,2)
February	
2 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
7 – Fri – 6:00-7:00 – Bake’n’Make Cookies’n’Cards	(1,2)
8 – Sat 10am-12:15pm – Loving our Widows Visits	(1,5 drivers)
16 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
March	
1 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
7 – Sat – Youth Activity (Escape Red Brick Rooms)	(1,2-3)
15 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
21 – Sat – Spring Cleanup for Church OR Parsonage OR Widows	(1,3)
April	
5 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
11 – Sat am – Laser Tag Activity	(1,3)
19 – Sun – Youth Group	(1,2)
May	
? 4 – Sat – Activity @ Rhodes	(1,2)
16 – Sat – SVHS Baccalaureate	(0,1)
17 – Sun – Graduation Sunday	

Host Responsibilities

August

24 – Sat – Kick off Activity __ (set time, plan outdoor meal, help plan, setup, organize games, work with Jana to advertise.)

September

15 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

?22 – SYATP Party – S’mores, songs and Prayer to plan SYATP __ (Work with Valley Cov and Kishwaukee church to plan)

October

6 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

?12 – Sat 4-7pm – Rhodes Cookout & College/military packages _____ (confirm date/time with Rhodes, work with Jana to advertise, collect name list for college/military, organize packing and shipping. Collect donations.)

20 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

27 – Sun – Around the Table with Seniors & Teens _____
_____ (plan food, decorations, and activity, communicate with Sr. Group, work with Jana to advertise.)

November

2 – Sat – Yard or Church Cleanup _____ (find a yard to clean OR clean church areas like garage, office basement, storage rooms. Decide on time, food/no food, etc. Work with Jana to advertise.)

**** OR **** Contact BOL to schedule a time to help (thanksgiving baskets?)

Bread of Life Contacts: Tammy (847) 404-9719 - or - Bonni (815) 298-5035

3 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

17 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

24 – Sun – JH Christmas Tree Decorating _____ (Meet with JH on Nov 17 during YG, plan decoration strategy, sign up for a tree with Stillman Bank, schedule, plan, and execute a decoration day.)

December

1 – Sun 4-6pm – JH Christmas Parties __ (serve dinner/snacks, organize gift exchange, go to Cardinal Christmas)

1 – Sun 6-8pm – SH Christmas Parties _____ (serve dinner in your home, organize gift exchange)

20 – Fri pm – Christmas Caroling _____ (work with Jana to finalize time, organize song sheets & groups, snacks after caroling)

January

17-20 – Winter Retreat _____ (work with Rock Valley and Mt Morris to plan the food) (Sponsor: Stay all weekend with teens)

25 – Rescue Mission Service _____ (Finalize exact date. Coordinate with RRM the time and instructions for our visit. Work with Jana to Pastor advertise and invite the church.)

February

2 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

7 – Fri – Bake’n’Make __ (organize cookies, cards, flowers, a snacks for teens *NOTE* extra supplies in associate pastor office closet)

8 – Sat 10am-12:15pm – Loving our Widows Visits (compile widow lists, make routes, organize delivery teams)

16 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

March

1 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

7 – Youth Activity _____ (finalize date/time, plan gaming activity, decide on food, work with Jana to advertise)

15 – Sun – Youth Group _____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

21 – Sat – Spring Clean-up____(choose location and time of cleanup, organize water/snack, work with Jana on advertising)

April

5 – Sun – Youth Group_____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

11 – Sat am – Laser Tag Activity_(finalize date/time, reserve lanes, schedule food, work with Jana to advertise)

19 – Sun – Youth Group_____ (serve lunch for 30-40 people, plan activity for JH)

What are Hosts and Sponsors?

Each youth event requires at least one host and multiple sponsors to accomplish the purpose of our youth program: to glorify God and maximize our joy by growing an extended family of fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Host

Activity Administrator

The host plans the meal, games, schedule/timing, *promotion, and decorations of the event.

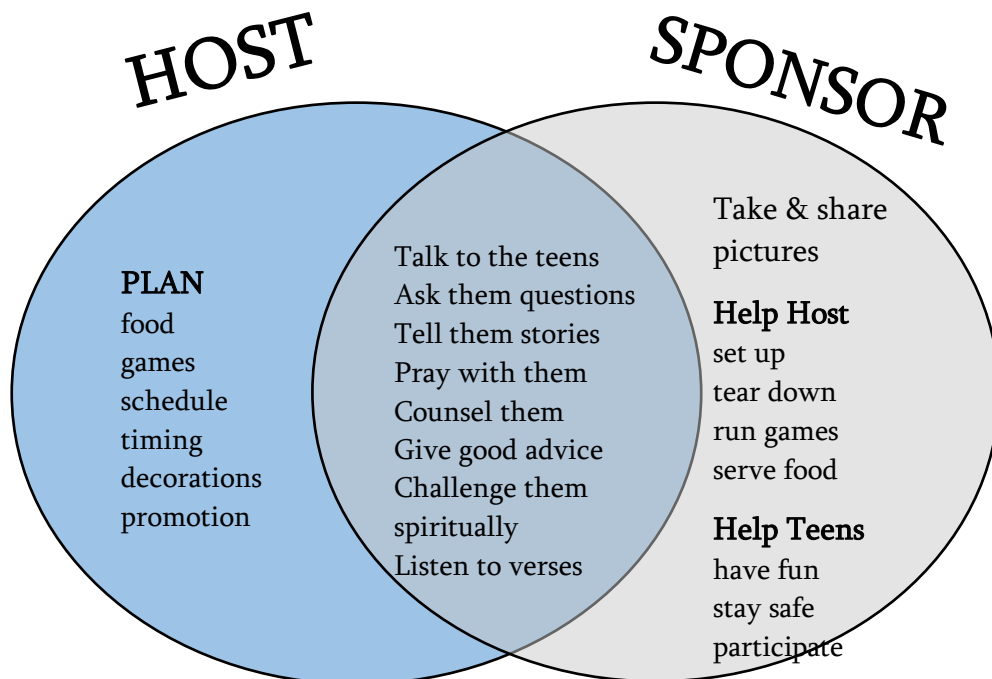
He or she should delegate some of the necessary tasks but is responsible to get everything done. The host will work with the church secretary on scheduling and promotion and should reach out to the event sponsor(s) for help.

Sponsor

Relationship Specialist

Sponsors should not merely help the activity run smoothly and take/share a few pictures.

The sponsor's primary purpose is to build Christ-centered relationships with the teens. This requires engaging the teens through conversation (not just observation).



*Promotion: The best activity promotion includes a bulletin announcement at least a month before the activity, a Facebook/Instagram post and a 'save the date' email a couple weeks before, and a reminding text the day before or on the day of the event.

Youth Opportunities at the Red Brick Church

Youth Group

BEING TOGETHER & STUDYING THE SCRIPTURE

Our teens meet the FIRST and THIRD Sunday of each month (with a few exceptions). Junior High AND Senior High Youth Group meet right after church 12-2:00pm for lunch. Youth Group is a time to have fun as Junior and Senior High groups and reflect on a Scriptural truth.

Youth Group Ministry Activities

DOING MINISTRY TOGETHER

We want our teens to know they are not only attending the Red Brick Church, but they are an important part of God's work in ministry here. Our teens have opportunities to visit widows, pack food baskets for needy families, send care packages and notes of encouragement to our college students, and more.

Youth Group Activities

HAVING FUN TOGETHER

Our youth group activities are sometimes combined and sometimes separated into SH and JH. They are great introductory activities for friends are new to our church family. We always have a lot of fun being together.

Camps/Retreats/Trips

FOCUSED ON GROWING SPIRITUALLY TOGETHER

We encourage our teens to attend one or more of the summer camps. Each person attending can receive a scholarship, and we have many additional scholarships available. We also combine with area churches in January for a local winter retreat. These are both excellent opportunities for teens to get outside of their normal routine, hear excellent preaching, and have fun with other teens. Summer mission trips also provides great service opportunities for teen to minister outside their normal comfort zone.

Weekly Service Opportunities

SERVING CHRIST THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH

On Sundays, our teens help in the technology booth, nursery, kids Sunday school, and worship music. On Wednesdays during the school year, several of our teens are involved as Leaders in Training (LIT) each week during AWANA. They help listen to verses, run games and make the program run smoothly.

Sunday School

TEACHING HOW TO DISCOVER WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS

On Sunday at 9:00, our teens meet in the admin building for age appropriate lessons about the Bible. Junior High goes through our Bible Instruction Class (BIC) to learn the story, purpose and structure of the Bible. Senior High studies various topics relevant to their life and future and what the Bible teaches about them. Some of the topics covered are authority of the Bible,

origin of the world, being a man/woman, marriage/family, church, ethics, prejudice, evil, religions and worldviews.

The Red Brick Church
Youth Philosophy

2019-2020

MISSION OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Our Youth Ministry maintains the mission of The Red Brick Church. “Youth Group” serves as one of the many “Life Triangles” we have at the Red Brick Church..

The mission or purpose of our church is to “glorify God and maximize our joy by growing an extended family of fully devoted followers of Christ.”

Everything we do relates to this purpose.

Life Triangles are one of the specific ways we pursue our mission at the Red Brick Church. We call them “Life Triangles” because they picture how we live together in unity - - how we share life or fellowship.

We also call them “Life Triangles” because participating is a matter of life or death. Community is not an option for believers. Sharing life together is critical if we are to survive (Hebrews 10:24-25).

We call them “Life Triangles” because the 3 sides of a triangle remind us of 3 interconnected activities that are the lifeblood of a local church.

As a church, we should:

1. **Assimilate** people into our local church: that is, tell people who we are and how they can be a part of it (1 John 1:3-4). Our youth need to belong to something bigger than themselves, and they need to have fun doing it.
2. **Educate** about Christ – It is through our knowledge of God that he gives us all we need for life and doctrine. Our church is striving together to be increasingly rooted in sound doctrine (Colossians 1:28-29, 2:6-7). Our youth must know how to understand the Bible for themselves before they go off to college. See our curriculum goals for the areas we target.
3. **Care** for one another. The Christian community should distinctively



Strengthen any one of the three and you help the other two.

demonstrate “love” (John 13:34-35).
Our ministry activities equip our
youth to care for each other and our
community outside the church.

CURRICULUM GOALS

The person who aims at “nothing” is sure to hit it. One of our goals for our local church is to clearly define what we are aiming at for flock’s understanding of truth. This document sets forth our curriculum target. These are the areas in which we aim to equip (Ephesians 4:12) our people.

Area to Know	Curriculum Goals
Faith Story: How did you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?	Write out your testimony / story of salvation with the gospel applied to your life. When were you baptized? Understand why the Lord’s Supper is so important in the life of the believer.
Basic Bible Study Methods (Hermeneutics): How can I study the Bible and live in light of truth?	Everyone in our church should be equipped to study a passage of Scripture by learning to study the authorial intent, identify the timeless truth (s), and apply truth to life today. We should follow the example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11-12)! See 7 Arrows for Bible Reading
Biblical Theology: What is the storyline of the Bible and how do the parts fit with the whole?	Know the Big Story of Scripture and Overview of Biblical Theology . Avoid knowing Bible stories but not the Bible story. Know Bible stories summarized in The Jesus Storybook Bible . See also The Big Picture of What God Always Wanted . Chris Bruno’s 16 Verses highlights the most important verses in the story of the Bible.
Systematic Theology / Doctrine: What does the whole of Scripture teach on central areas of doctrine such as the doctrine of Christ?	Church Doctrinal Statement The Apostles Creed The Nicene Creed New City Catechism Bible Instruction Class Theologically rich hymns
Never Forget : 7 Pastoral Emphases at the Red Brick Church Given our time and place, what are the points our local church emphasizes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know that following Christ is both right and best. 2. Be warned. Be sure. Get up. 3. Understand that God makes “bricks” with a building in mind. 4. Sharpen your wisdom with the Word 5. Envision a beautiful bride walking down the aisle in a Christ-centered wedding. 6. Think deeply about true answers. 7. Be assured: the people of the Red Brick Church love you.

“NEVER FORGET” LETTER TO GRADUATES

Congratulations 2019 Graduate:

For over 25 years of pastoral ministry I have thought reminders to give graduates on one page. Obviously, I can't say *everything*. Rather, these are essential matters I want to say to you at this pivotal time.

- 1. Know that following Christ is both right and best.** Believing in Jesus is right because Jesus is the One true God. He deserves all glory. Putting our faith and trust in Jesus is best because Jesus came that we might have life more abundantly. If you have not done so already, give your life to the King. On the Cross, he paid the penalty for His people so that we could spend eternity together on the New Earth in his presence. The alternative to believing in Jesus is unthinkable. We must believe in Jesus and share the Good News with others!
- 2. Be warned. Be sure. Get up.** Be warned: the way of the sinner is hard. Don't buy the lie that you can make wrong choices and not reap the consequences. Be sure you really are a Christian (2 Cor 13:5, James 2:17). The worst words that will ever be heard will be when *many* stand before Christ thinking they are Christians and find out that they will spend eternity in hell. Get up. When you stumble as a Christian, as you will, don't let failure give way to failure. Keep on. Persevere.
- 3. Remember that God makes bricks with a building in mind.** Christians should be mortared together in local churches (1 Peter 2:5). Gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve together, local churches are called to subtly season and boldly light the darkness across the street and around the world. Don't put church on hold for the next few years.
- 4. Sharpen your wisdom saw with the Word.** Wisdom is skill for living. It is the “saw” we use to cut our way through life. We need a sharp saw to make quality decisions. We begin our quest for wisdom with the fear of the Lord and continue sharpening our wisdom saws by memorizing and reading the Word and by hearing it preached. Be Word-centered! Rinse in Scripture. It is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.
- 5. Envision a beautiful bride walking down the aisle in a Christ-centered wedding.** Most of you will marry. God's plan for sex and marriage is breathtakingly beautiful. All of us, even those who remain single, must remember that the Church is the bride of Christ. Marriage and the gospel explain one another. We cannot allow unbelieving culture to corrupt our vision for Christ-centered weddings and homes.
- 6. Think deeply about true answers.** Don't stumble through life as unconscious zombies. Too many in our day walk thinking about life's big questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Why do we love? Why is there pain? How can we know God? Don't be a zombie! Insist on answers. Let's welcome discussion about what we believe so that we can point others to our King. Let's be obedient in sharing the gospel or good news of Jesus with people all around the world.
- 7. Be assured: the people of the Red Brick Church love you.** Love didn't evolve. Love wasn't invented. Love is eternal because our triune God is eternally love: ever giving and self-giving. He loves us and tells us to love one another. And we do. We love you. When we get to the Heavenly City, we want to know you will be at our meeting spot: 5th tree, right side of the river, facing the throne. We will be there soon. Until then, I am a pastoral resource available to you!

In Him,
Pastor Chris Brauns

with Pastor Tim Michalek

Twenty-One Verses To “Never Forget”

	“Never Forget”	Bible Verses to Study / Memorize
1	Know that following Christ is right and best.	John 10:10 Ephesians 2:8-9 Hebrews 11:6
2	Be warned and be sure.	Galatians 6:7 2 Corinthians 13:5 1 John 5:13
3	Remember that God makes bricks with a building in mind.	1 Peter 2:5 Hebrews 10:25 1 Corinthians 12:13
4	Sharpen your wisdom saw with the Word.	Romans 12:1-2 Psalm 119:9 Deuteronomy 6:4-9
5	Envision a beautiful bride walking down the aisle.	Genesis 2:23 Matthew 19:6 Ephesians 5:31-32
6	Think deeply about true answers.	1 Peter 3:15 Philippians 1:9-10 Matthew 28:18-20
7	Be assured: the people of the Red Brick Church love you.	1 John 4:10 John 13:34-35 Revelation 21:3

The Whole Story Of The Bible In 16 Verses

1. Creation (Genesis 1: 31)
2. Human Beings (Genesis 1: 27– 28)
3. The Fall (Genesis 3: 6– 7)
4. Redemption Promised (Genesis 3: 15)
5. Abraham (Genesis 12: 2– 3)
6. Judah the King (Genesis 49: 10)
7. The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12: 23)
8. King David (2 Samuel 7: 12– 13)

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 9. The Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53: 6) | 14. Resurrection (Romans 1: 3– 4) |
| 10. Resurrection Promised (Ezekiel 37: 3– 5) | 15. Justification (Romans 3: 21– 26) |
| 11. New Creation (Isaiah 65: 17) | 16. Glory (Revelation 21: 1– 4) |
| 12. Fulfillment! (Mark 1: 14– 15) | By Chris Bruno |
| 13. The Cross (John 19: 30) | |

Why Should We Never Forget These Points?

- Why know that following Christ is right and best?
 I know that following Jesus is right because he is the way, the truth, and the life. Following Jesus is best because only Jesus meets the deepest needs of my heart and life. So the Westminster shorter catechism begins by saying that our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
 I understand that I will not always feel that Jesus is best. Until Christ returns, Christians struggle with temptations that whisper that something other than Christ - - some achievement, some passion, some possession ---will satisfy. I must battle those temptations.
- Why should I be warned and be sure?
 I need to be warned because if I choose to sin I am choosing to suffer. I need to be sure because the Bible says that there are some people who think they are Christians when they are not. As a result, I need to know [the proper basis for assurance of salvation](#). [And I need to kill sin before it kills me!](#)
- Why should I remember that God makes bricks with a building in mind?
 Remembering that God makes bricks with a building in mind reminds me that I deeply need to be mortared into Christian community. In a local church, I need to be baptized and see others baptized. In my local church I need to corporately observe the Lord's Supper, hear the Word preach, pray, share life with God's people.
- Why do I need to sharpen my wisdom with the Word?
 A good life requires good decision making and decision making skills are improved by having my mind transformed by God's Word. Until I gain experience in life, I need to rely on the wisdom of my parents, grandparents, and the body of Christ.
- Why should I envision a beautiful bride walking down the aisle?
 God's plan for marriage is beautiful and is vital for my future, that of children, and of the local church. Though all of us are called to be single at various points in life, and though not all get married, a marriage is a picture of the gospel for everyone. Christ calls the Church his bride. This is a beautiful picture.
- Why do I need to think deeply about true answers?
 Many people go through life as zombies not thinking through the big questions like: Why am I here? What happens after death? How can I know joy and happiness? If we do not live in light of biblical answers, we will stumble through life and make poor decisions. Ultimately,

those who do not think deeply about the meaning of life will spend eternity in hell apart from Christ.

7. Why can I be assured that the people of the Red Brick Church love me?
I can be assured of the love of my church family because God is love and he has loved his church. As the people of a God of love, my church is called to be distinctive as those who love one another. I further know that the people of my church love me by how they gather together every week for over 150 years.

Why Memorize These Verses?

1. Why memorize [John 10:10](#)? [John 10:1-18](#) is the passage where Jesus describes himself as the ideal or good shepherd. Echoing [Psalm 23](#), Jesus tells us that his sheep know his voice and that he came to care for his flock that we might have life more abundantly.
2. Why memorize [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)? In Ephesians 2 the Apostle Paul describes how God loved us even when we were rebellious so that we might be saved by grace. This Scripture makes it clear that we in no way earn our salvation.
3. Why memorize [Hebrews 11:6](#)? Hebrews 11 is the great “Hall of Faith” chapter in which the author of Hebrews describes how Old Testament believers made great decisions because of their faith. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that if we are to follow the faithful example of these Old Testament heroes we must believe two things: (1) That God is real and (2) That God rewards those who seek Him.
4. Why memorize [Galatians 6:7](#)? Galatians 6:7 warns us that bad decisions make fun of God and that we cannot expect to make them without their being bad consequences. To the extent that we choose to sin, we choose to suffer.
5. Why memorize [2 Corinthians 13:5](#)? In 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul reminds us to examine ourselves to see if we really are in the faith. If we are truly “born again” as Christians, we will see the fruit of the Christian life.
6. Why memorize [1 John 5:13](#)? Similar, to 1 Corinthians 13:5, John tells us that the purpose of 1 John is to know the proper basis for assurance of salvation. Elsewhere in the Bible, we read that the basis for assurance of salvation is: (1) Present faith (2) The fruit or evidence of a changed life (3) The testimony of the Holy Spirit with our spirit that we are God’s children.
7. Why memorize [1 Peter 2:5](#)? In 1 Peter 2:5 Peter reminded suffering children that God intended that they would be built up into a spiritual house with the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. God makes bricks with a building in mind!
8. Why memorize [Hebrews 10:25](#)? Hebrews 10:25 warns us that we must be in church where our souls can be fed and where we can encourage one another.
9. Why memorize [1 Corinthians 12:13](#)? 1 Corinthians 12:13 assures me of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and teaches me of the unity of the body of Christ.
10. Why memorize [Romans 12:1-2](#)? Romans 12:1-2 teach us that in light of the gospel we should offer our lives to Christ as living sacrifices. Further, in order to make good decisions, we need for our minds to be shaped by the Bible in an ongoing way.

11. Why memorize [Psalm 119:9](#)? Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and it is an extended explanation of why God's Word is so precious. Psalm 119:9 tells me that the way young people can avoid the many temptations of this life is to live according to God's Word.
12. Why memorize [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#)? When Jesus was asked what is the first and greatest commandment, he quoted Deuteronomy 6:4. This passage teaches us that there is only one God, that he must be central in all of life, and that our families should constantly strive to learn more about him.
13. Why memorize [Genesis 2:23](#)? Genesis 2:18-25 gives us God's blueprint for the family. It was not good for Adam to be alone, so God created Eve who was like him, but different, and perfectly suited to fit together with Adam in every way.
14. Why memorize [Matthew 19:6](#)? In Matthew 19:6 Jesus instructed us that marriage between a man and a woman is a solemn union that should not be torn apart.
15. Why memorize [Ephesians 5:31-32](#)? Ephesians 5:31-32 teaches that marriage is the central human relationship for those who are married, so much so that we leave our parents to be married. Further, the passage shows me that marriage and the gospel help us to understand one another because the church is the bride of Christ.
16. Why memorize [1 Peter 3:15](#)? 1 Peter 3:15 teaches us that when we suffer or are questioned because of our Christian faith we should be prepared to gently and humbly explain why we believe that Christ is our hope for all of life.
17. Why memorize [Philippians 1:9-10](#)? In Philippians 1:9-10, the Apostle Paul modeled how we should pray that Christian love would become increasingly wise so that we can make good decisions for the glory of Christ.
18. Why memorize [Matthew 28:18-20](#)? Matthew 28:18-20 is the Great Commission in which Jesus instructed his disciples to go into all the world and make fully devoted followers of Him both baptizing them and teaching them about Jesus.
19. Why memorize [1 John 4:10](#)? 1 John 4:10 shows us that God the Father defined love by sending his son to pay the penalty for our sins.
20. Why memorize [John 13:34-35](#)? In 1 John 13:34-35 Jesus [gave the new commandment to love one another](#) as he has loved us. Jesus us told us that love would be a distinctive way that all people would know we are his followers.
21. Why memorize [Revelation 22:1](#)? Revelation 22 gives us a preview of the heavenly city where believers will gather in the presence of Jesus. This is the passage Pastor Chris has in mind when he says that we will meet at the 5th tree on the right side of the river. Later in the chapter we are promised that we will be there soon.

PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Thoughts for The Red Brick Church

Pastor Chris Brauns

Abbreviated Draft #7 8/5/14

1. **The vision for our youth, and our whole church family, is to spend eternity together in the presence of Christ our King.**

Ours is a big dream! It is the most compelling vision ever and youth leadership (and all leadership) must begin with a compelling vision.

It is a very difficult time for young people to envision life after high school. Debt threatens them. Substance abuse is tempting. The economy is slipping. They don't feel as though they fit in many of our churches . . .

- a. **From our ultimate vision of spending eternity with Jesus, we must help teens and their families vividly envision a Christian plan for each step of the way.**

Youth leadership is about envisioning the beautiful places where we encourage our teens to visit along the rode of life. Hence, leadership must be positive (see Marcus Buckingham)

We have done a better job helping teens envision what it means to follow Christ in high school with camp and youth group. But now we need to give them a very vivid vision of life during the college and career years.

We should help teens see the beauty of positive relationships with their parents and grandparents.

The lack of vision for college and career is threatening our future.

We should help teens envision life immediately following high school (college, debt, church involvement, ministry, dating, marriage).

We need to paint the picture and encourage it whole-heartedly.

- b. **There must be recognition that progress in spiritual growth requires intense effort.**

We have to dig for wisdom as though we are looking for treasure.

2. **Our most basic “nutritional” need is for the Gospel and the Word of God.**

- a. We do not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Deut 8:3). “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).”

All ministries to all people must be Word centered and this includes youth (Psalm 119:9). If we are not Word-centered *now*, we lose our children *forever*.

- b. **Another way to say that we must be Word-centered is to say that we must be “Gospel centered.”**

Over and over again - - repeatedly - - we will talk about what we mean by the Gospel. Our children youth should hear the Gospel at church, at home, and at youth group.

Studies in recent years have repeatedly demonstrated that a large number of young people, who consider themselves Christians, ascribe to what Christian Smith called “moralistic-therapeutic-deism”.¹ The idea that we need only be “good” is “a way that seems right to people, but in the end it is death (Proverbs 14:12).” It is *not* enough to be up-standing citizens. Many people who are considered “good” by the standards of society do not know Christ. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? (Matthew 16:26).

Likewise, we must stay away from behavioristic methods that seek to control children rather than evangelize them.

- c. **We must stay “centered” in the Gospel rather than attractive tangents.**

Those navigating youth ministry in the 21st Century find themselves navigating between extremes in a number of areas:

Left Ditch		Right Ditch
Worldly		“Amish”
Teens isolated by age group / de-emphasis of family		No youth ministry / family and church seen synonymously
Games only		Non-engaging and irrelevant teaching
A “decisionist” approach with little or know structured curriculum or teaching	(see Keller, “The Need for Gospel Renewal”)	“Programmed conversion” / formalized spirituality through confirmation etc / no recognition of revival
Complete para-church approach		A refusal to ever cooperate with other churches
Outward – Student activists focused only on service projects or trips but not real gospel foundation ²		Inward – Consumer focused whether it is heavy emphasis on teaching and discipleship or, worse, entertainment

From Bruce McKanna:

Inward: Students are receptacles. The best case scenario has a heavy emphasis on teaching and discipleship. The worst case scenario is all entertainment and attractions for an “audience.” There is no evangelism beyond invitations to the event, and no service to the body or the community.

¹ Christian Smith et al., *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

² Credit to Bruce McKanna for help on this point.

Outward: Students are activists. Community service and mission trips are nice things to do to keep kids busy, change the world, and put something on their college application. No gospel foundation means no ultimate purpose or reason for witness.

Balance: Robust discipleship includes intensive input of teaching and equipping, and this results in bold witness of the gospel and sacrificial service in Christ's name and for his kingdom.

- d. **The preaching of the Word must be particularly valued. We will especially value expository teaching and preaching.**

This means we will seek to equip our people to teach and preach in such a way: "A biblical bullet fired at the life of the listener"

- e. **Quitting the Christian Faith (or taking a break even) cannot be an option; we will never accept that it is okay or acceptable for children to walk away from the faith.**

We are saved by faith alone, but not faith that is alone. Those who walk away from local church involvement must question the reality of their faith (1 John 2:19).

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Matthew 7:21-23 ESV

Jesus warned that many think they have eternal life when they do not (Matt 7:21 ff). This is sobering. Our goal is that all of our young people will continue in active fellowship with a Christ-centered church without interruption. Eternity is at stake. We love our children and will persevere in identifying ways to better minister to them. The reality is that our church has lost our young people at an alarming rate. This cannot continue.

- f. **The call to follow Christ is a call to be weird.** As Chesterton said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you odd." We must let our young people know that as those who are to be set apart, we must be different and distinct from the world.
- g. **Our teens (and their families) must learn that not everything that calls itself Christian is Christian.**

We wish (in part) that our children would all stay around here forever. But they may at some point go off to college or possibly change locations. We need to teach them how to evaluate the Christian confession of particular places.

Most colleges that call themselves Christian are not, in fact, Christian.

Most (?) churches that call themselves Christian are not, in fact, truly committed to the gospel and biblical Christianity.

This all comes together to envision our church where parents are biblically challenged in an ongoing way, where people relate to one another as extended family. For youth ministry, in particular, we envision a team of adult leaders, each serving in their areas of giftedness, who build vital relationships with young people.

3. **God's primary and foundational means for the discipleship of children and youth is through families.**

A church's first strategy for building into children is by the discipleship of parents. Pastors and local churches must encourage and equip parents to impart the faith to their children when they sit at home and when they walk along the road, when they lie down and when they get up (Deut 6:4-9).

Youth leaders must teach and encourage young people to honor their fathers and mothers because this commandment comes with a promise, that it may go well with them (Ephesians 6:2).

See my story in my Easter Primer about a grandma who uses flannel-graph

a. **There are many areas of Christian liberty regarding the parenting of youth and youth ministries.**

Cell phones, social media, school choice, video games, dancing: no two families will precisely agree. We must accept that there are differences and work together graciously.

Sad Mom says:

"Can church camp environments produce emotional experiences that are not authentic signs of spiritual transformation?"

Of course they can. Our son attended Camp XXXXXX in grade school and in middle school. We have a DVD from the camp in which our son is seen sitting around with the other kids and the pastors and camp staff. It is night and the kids are giving their "testimonies". Our son is seen giving an emotional testimony. Fast forward a few years. Our son is almost grown now and is adamant that he does not believe any of it. He has no love for God and refers to Jesus as "our invisible friend".

4. **Having emphasized the importance of the family, our central allegiance in life is to Christ and his Church, not the family (Luke 14:26).**

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26-27

Some forms of the home church movement have exhibited a poor ecclesiology. Of course, it is fine for a church to meet in a home! But it must be a local church. Our central program strategy for youth will be in our local church. As our staff situation allows, we are open to cooperating with other local churches periodically for events like See You at the Pole. However, our programming will not focus around cooperative events which, in the extreme, can distance young people from their own church. Such collaborative efforts are often confined to a "lowest common denominator" of theological truth. Our primary energies will be in integrating youth into the life of the church.

a. **We are praying that our church will be used to raise-up a new generation of leaders.**

Quite the opposite of leaving the faith, our church prays that all will follow Christ and that some will be called into Christian leadership, either vocationally or in their local churches as elders, deacons, CE Committee members etc. Unto whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:47-48). We have a tremendous opportunity to disciple our young people to go into all the world to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

This means we must be very intentional and vivid in helping our young people envision:

- How to make the transition from high school to college or a career.
- How to choose a college or career.
- How to dream about a Christ-centered wedding and marriage.
- How to choose a church.

b. **Our church will not exclusively compartmentalize youth by age group or distance them from the family of believers.**

The church as a whole should be seen as extended family and love should be evident. Relationships with adults in the church are as important as relationships with peers. Indeed, the relationships between youth and adults are more strategically important than peer-to-peer relationships given the biblical emphasis on older people teaching younger (Titus 2:1-15).

c. **Consequently, children and youth must learn to be in the worship service at church.**

Indeed, the first Sunday morning priority should be for teens to be in the worship service. On some level, corporate worship is an acquired taste. We must learn the joy of singing together, praying together, and hearing the Word preached. The goal should be for young people to be here for both hours on Sunday.

If only one hour on Sunday morning works, then young people should be in the worship service.

We should not be surprised when young people check out of church if they have never learned to worship.

Humanly speaking, if your child does not learn to sit in church as a child and teen, he or she will most likely walk away from the faith shortly after college.

5. **There is a *great* need for age specific youth ministry.**

a. **In a fallen world, most young people in our culture do not live in homes that are Christ-centered, which means we do need to do outreach in age specific ways.**

It is a fact that young people are more open to the Gospel than those who are older. Yet, many young people do not have Christ-centered homes. Unfortunately, this includes some who attend church. Churches must make strategic decisions about whether or not they will simply leave those teens to be on their own, or, if they will seek to reach out to young people who are searching for answers. While some disagree, most evangelical churches in our culture believe that one means of reaching out to young people is through a youth ministry. Our

church will strive to engage our community and to actively proclaim the gospel to those who are lost.

- b. **Further, even teens from Christian homes rightly desire to grow in Christian fellowship with their peers.**

This does not mean that families can be marginalized (see #2), but rather the point is that it is legitimate for teens to have friends their own age and social events where they enjoy one another's company. Our church believes that we should offer events with a vision of Spirit-filled teens speaking to one another with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:18-20).

- c. **Teens, who do not experience Christ-centered fellowship with peers, often satisfy their thirst for those relationships in unhealthy ways.**

6. **Leading Youth Ministries requires great wisdom and skill.**

- a. **Leading Youth Ministry requires a different sort of training and expertise than children's ministries.**

In our context, Children's Ministries is more like connect the dots or paint by numbers; Youth Ministries are more free form. AWANA and Children's Ministries have defined structures and methods. For AWANA, we know what we are going to do, the curriculum we are going to use, when they will meet, and the personnel required.

Youth ministry on the other hand requires greater flexibility and more diverse expertise. It demands more intellectually (the questions get tougher). It requires more diversity in leadership.

- b. **We must become adept at apologetics (see Job notes and glossary) & Piper on defeater beliefs**
- c. **Youth Ministries requires a large team of volunteers who are plugged into their areas of giftedness.**
- d. **Our programming philosophy will involve events at several levels of time and effort.**

We will encourage small, simple, spontaneous get-togethers, planned meetings with leaders, fun events, and also major events such as camp or a missions trip. Programming will be simple, and the organization of games will be largely up to the teens themselves.

- e. **Our methodology will intentionally leverage social media.**

Youth ministries cannot operate most effectively in the 21st century without interacting with young people through web sites and social media. This requires expertise, time, and money. But it is essential.

- f. **JH and SH Teens are in markedly different places of development. Hence, not all events for JH and SH can be combined.**

- g. **As a church, we are not going to be tossed about by every wind of change in philosophies of youth ministry.**

There is a tendency in our age to lurch from one youth group theory to the next - - - In the last 40 years, there have been various trends which include: big event youth ministry, small group based youth ministry, Christian schools, homeschools, no youth groups, separate church for youth, etc etc . We have learned from many of these trends and emphases. But we are looking for a steady, long term philosophy of youth ministry that stresses the centrality of the local church, the need for the Word to be proclaimed, the importance of the family, etc.

The Red Brick Church
Stillman/Byron School Calendars

2019-2020



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