

Youth Pulse Check Summary & Youth Pastor Scott's Response - 10/14/18

Who Participated?

- 10 people participated
- 2 parents/youth leaders
- 4 parents
- 4 youth
- Average Age Adults: 46
- Average Age Youth: 14
- Ranges: Age 13-48
- Average Years at Epiphany – Adults: 9
- Average Years at Epiphany – Youth: 4
- Ranges: Years 2- 15

Sunday Mornings

1. **Feedback Summary** -Some youth liked being in the sanctuary for service – for those coming Sunday mornings. They felt that youth group on Sunday evenings was enough “class” time. Some preferred class in place of service because they felt it was more geared toward them. Saturday night attendees would like to see a youth class offered, like what is offered on Sunday mornings so that church service is not their only option. Most who attend classes felt they are informative and participatory. Some also missed having communion on the first Sunday of the month because they are attending class and suggested that communion could be incorporated on those Sundays.

Scott's Response: If there is interest and at least 10 teens committed to an alternative day for Sunday School I could offer another time for a class. What I am more encouraged by is that teens are starting Bible studies throughout the week or getting involved in leading Christian clubs at their schools such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes. I do finish class early on the first Sunday of the month so that the teens can go participate in communion in the main service. We also do communion at the Small Group Kickoff in September and the end-of-the-year Celebration in May.

2. **Feedback Summary** - There was a desire for music with youth worship on Sunday evenings – a sense of a “void”. (Parent), feel like the kids have heard and can discuss the lessons from Sunday morning class. Those who attend Saturday night wish there was a class option available but know that there is a time crunch. They (kids) would like to see youth-led music (parent) would like to see more discussion around tithing/financial responsibility to the church.

Scott's Response: I so want to offer more music. That is the missing link to our youth program. The thing is, I have tried to get the teens to take ownership of doing this but

they are all too busy. I will continue to try to make this happen either with teens leading it or maybe trying other alternative ways to do worship music. (YouTube videos). We do have worship on the Small Group Kickoff in September and the end-of-the-year Celebration in May as well as the Great Wolf Lodge retreat (sometimes the Fall Retreat also). I do discuss tithing/using spiritual gifts to serve the church and community in general. Youth are encouraged to bring money to in the beginning of the year and the end of the school year make a financial donation to sponsor a child in a third world countries through Compassion International.

Small Groups

Feedback Summary: Greater participation among junior high group than senior high – in particular juniors and seniors. It is harder to block out time on a Sunday evening for older kids due to homework, jobs, other conflicts. It was stated that it is “nothing Scott is doing”. There is definitely more participation for the “fun things”. Due to texting/communicating, the word gets out who is going/not going and that has a real effect on who shows up for an event or Sunday evening. “I’m not going if you’re not going”. Most felt strongly that their small group was like family and they feel a strong sense of trust and support and able to share with full confidence. Their best friends are in their small group, both in and out of the church setting. There has been some struggle with consistency of small group leaders. It is optimal for them to have the same leader throughout their youth group experience, but understand that things happen that make that difficult, i.e. job transfers, etc. Having new leaders can make it difficult to develop relationships and trust. Some had the experience of a “mentor” – an older (senior) who participated with younger kids. This is good because they are more current with the social setting they are in and in touch with their world. They would like to see more of that. Confirmation is a great kick-off to youth group and in establishing relationships/bonds in a spiritual way. Having more “engagements”, i.e. micro missions being built into Sunday night might inspire more participation and activity, especially among older kids. Hands on experience is good, kids like/want it (leaders) would like to see more accountability. Sometimes hard for new folks because there is an assumption that they know the process, i.e. finding a mentor for their confirmand

Scott’s Response: My commitment with the adult leaders is on a year-to-year basis with the hope that they continue with their group from 7th-12th grade. I communicate with them on a weekly basis and offer quarterly training sessions to engage them even more with teens. We will be hosting the National Day of Volunteer Youth Ministry Training simulcast at our church on Saturday, September 21 at the church. This will be open to all our volunteer leaders as well as

any other church that would like to participate in the East Cincinnati area. This will be a great way for them to get some of the best training from some of the most important youth specialists in the country. I regularly communicate with my leaders so that they know ahead of time what the lesson and small group discussion guide looks like prior to Sunday. I use REMIND and CONSTANT CONTACT to communicate weekly about small groups, Sunday mornings, Confirmation and any other details coming up. I make myself available to substitute teach if a leader cannot make it on any particular Sunday night.

Mission Activities

Feedback Summary: Can conflict with outside schedules/activities. Desire for more involvement. Santa's workshop is a popular event. Kids like the "hands on" experience. Desire for more focus. Sometimes it feels as if it is too scattered and it could be more organized. Would rather sink their teeth into one project than move among a few/several. Good/better to tie the project to its importance/influence to the mission. Trips – Breeds better/deeper relationships. Youth can see and feel God in the world through the mission trip experience. Good to see their peers in a different light/setting. They would like to have more days of actually doing the work. Some trips, there were only 3 days of the 6 days there that were devoted to the actual mission. They would also like to see more focus and less variance in the jobs, i.e. one or two jobs instead of "bouncing around". They would like to work more/longer to make more of an impact. Their time would be better spent. (Parent) Important for the adult leader to communicate that mission trips are not just about work but through varied experiences they have, i.e. being "homeless" for a night. Important to understand that "where God is even when it's not staring at you in the face" and that it's important to celebrate that.

Scott's Response: I base my concept of mission trips on Acts 1:8. I want to be able to give all teens a local, state, national (urban and rural), and international experience during their youth group years so that they are exposed to a variety of needs, experience, and social justice and spiritual issues. Over the past few years, including this Summer, we have former youth group students who, as college students or adults, are attending the mission trips as adult leaders. This has been wonderful for the teens to have these experiences with those who have gone before them and are now investing time into them as a result. I typically have two years thought out for the mission trips. Mission trip expectations are that the teens do the required paperwork, 4 quizzes on Bible memorization, Bible reading and involvement in small groups and/or Sunday morning class. International trips may include passports and medical updates also. My hope for the next two Summers is to try out the Mexico mission trip with Pastor Kathy's connections and to try out a Back2Back mission trip (either Dominican Republic, India or Nigeria trip).

Administrative Support

Feedback Summary: Scott needs help!!! Especially when it comes to organizing activities & administrative aspects of the job. Would be beneficial to have a “plus one”. Would be good to discover why older kids (Juniors & Seniors) drop out and what might keep them better engaged.

Scott’s Response: I would love more assistance. I am currently thinking up ways to instill more leadership opportunities especially with my older teens to take on some of the work of the ministry. At the beginning of every year I have the parent’s register their teens for the year. With that, they can specify how they would like to help throughout the year: lead or assist small groups, administrative assistance, drive for activities, provide snacks or mentor a confirmand. Would love to have a parent/youth subcommittee work to get additional insight/solutions on improving seniors and junior’s participation in Youth Group. The participation from upperclassmen varies from year to year.

Contact Information: If you would like additional information on the Epiphany Pulse Check Data please feel free to contact Matt Baker – Staff Parish Relations Chair – mbaker@knkreuiting.com