

Youth Newsletter

February 2005

Alphas, Omegas to Participate in World Vision 30 Hour Famine

On Friday, February 25 and Saturday, February 26, Bethlehem's junior and senior high youth will go without food for 30 hours so that other less fortunate children may eat.

Over 29,000 children die every day due to hunger and hunger-related diseases.

World Vision's 30 Hour Famine is an international youth movement to fight hunger and change the lives of the famine participants and hungry children all over the world.

This year, thousands of youth groups in more than 21 countries—over 1 million youth worldwide—will unite with one goal in mind: to help children living in some of the most deplorable conditions on earth.

Youth will be seeking donors and sponsors in the congregation and our local community. It takes only \$30 per month—just \$1 a day—to feed and care for a child through World Vision, even in the most remote of locations.

Then, beginning after lunch on Friday, the youth will not have any solid food to eat until they break their famine at dinner on Saturday.

While participating in the Famine, the group will get a real taste of what hunger is like, and will participate in various activities that will unite the youth and make a lasting impact on their lives.

World Vision is a non-profit Christian relief organization that is dedicated to meeting the needs of children, families, and communities all over the world. World Vision has been helping people in need for over 50 years. Each year, more than 80 million people in almost 100 countries receive the hope of a brighter future through thousands of World Vision projects worldwide.

Last year, thanks to the overwhelming support of the congregation and community, Bethlehem's youth collected pledges of \$1,106—enough to feed 3 needy children for over a year.

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULES

SCOOTERS • VOYAGERS • PATHFINDERS

- February 6** Regular Meeting, 12:15pm-2:00pm
Souper Bowl Sunday
youth are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the church's Food Pantry
- February 13** Regular Meeting, 5:30pm-7:15pm
- February 20** Regular Meeting, 5:30pm-7:15pm
- February 27** Regular Meeting, 5:30pm-7:15pm
- March 6** Family Skating Party, 5:15pm-7:15pm
Smithfield Skate LTD

ALPHAS • OMEGAS

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youth are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the church's Food Pantry
- February 13** Regular Meeting, 5:30pm-7:15pm
- February 19-21** SnowBlast 2K5 Ski Retreat
see trip package for time and details
- February 25-26** World Vision 30 Hour Famine, time and details TBA
- March 6** Family Skating Party, 5:15pm-7:15pm
Smithfield Skate LTD

For more detailed information about your group's schedule, please contact your group's leaders.

This year, with the incredible devastation in Asia, the need is greater than ever. Fortunately, World Vision is right there, in 12 countries affected by the tsunamis, providing food, bottled water, medicines, sleeping mats, clothing, and other needed items.

So, this year, when a junior or senior high youth asks you to sponsor them for the World Vision 30 Hour Famine, please consider helping to fight hunger all over the world and to spread the love of Christ to a world in need. Thank you in advance for your support and prayers.

Youth Director's Corner by David Salerno

Over the past several weeks, it has been brought to my attention that there have been some concerns expressed about the content and structure of the Senior High youth fellowship program.

These concerns were not brought directly to my attention, or to the attention of the Senior High youth leadership, but instead were brought to the Youth Advisory Committee by the Deaconry Board.

These concerns have been extensively discussed by the Youth Advisory Committee, and, over the next several weeks, I plan to personally discuss these concerns with all Senior High parents, both individually and as a group.

But I thought I should take the opportunity here this month to briefly explain what our strategy and vision is for the Junior High and Senior High youth fellowship program, and some of the reasoning behind that strategy and vision.

What you see in our Junior High and Senior High youth fellowship program is the direct result of my 11 years of experience as a Junior High youth leader and my 5 years of experience as Youth Coordinator, as well as the wealth of experience that the individual club leaders have gained while working "in the trenches".

It is the result of constant self-analysis, reflection, and prayer.

It is the result of considerable research and study into dozens of texts written by youth ministry experts, such as Mike Yaconelli, Duffy Robbins, Doug Fields, Jim Burns, and Len Kageler.

It is the result of over a decade of observation, and realizing what works and what doesn't, what is effective and what isn't, what "gets through" to today's youth and what doesn't.

An effective, growing youth fellowship program such as ours does not happen by accident.

The current structure of the Junior High and Senior High youth fellowship program is an appropriate balance of fellowship, service, and devotions.

Just as all parts of the body are important and have a crucial role to play, each of these elements are critical to a successful youth fellowship program, and work together to complement and build upon each other.

Focus solely on fellowship, and we are little more than a social club. But focus solely on devotions, and we are essentially Sunday School at night.

When the focus is only on one of these three critical elements, to the exclusion of the others, we essentially put limits on what God can do both in and through our youth. But by incorporating all three elements in their proper balance, we help our youth to reach their full potential by learning, living, and sharing their faith.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6 IS
SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY!**

**SPECIAL REGULAR MEETING TIME
12:15PM-2:00PM
(FOLLOWING MORNING WORSHIP)**

LUNCH PROVIDED

**PLEASE BRING A NON-PERISHABLE FOOD
ITEM TO HELP RESTOCK BETHLEHEM'S FOOD
PANTRY FOR THE NEEDY IN OUR COMMUNITY**

An effective youth fellowship program does more than simply teach your child about Christ. It also teaches them about **Christian living**.

Our devotional curriculum for Junior and Senior High consists of a library of materials from leading Christian publishers such as Group Publishing and Youth Specialties, which are provided by the Youth Director, and periodically reviewed and approved by the appropriate curriculum review committee. Our current curriculum was reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Christian Education in 2004.

Materials are selected not only for their Scriptural content, but also for their applicability and relevance to today's youth.

Further, these materials represent a wide range of learning styles—lecture, "hands-on", object-oriented, discussion-based, active learning, participatory, etc.

Recognizing that all youth learn differently and have varying attention spans, we utilize a variety of devotions using different learning styles and of varying lengths in order to obtain the maximum effectiveness and the greatest long-term impact.

Even a game, played with Biblical questions and encouraging the youth to look up the answers for themselves, can be a very effective teaching tool and part of a greater strategy.

I would like to end this month by thanking everyone for their expressions of support and encouragement. We work very hard to help your child learn essentials of the faith, and to put that faith into action.

Next month, I will discuss the various teaching methods used in club, why one particular method is the most effective of all, and why another certain method is largely ineffective in teaching youth for long-term retention.

Until next month, God bless,

