

Philosophy of Ministry

Chuck Hilman

Vision:

To reach students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equip them to use their strengths and gifts for the transformation of the world.

Personal Values:

I must set an example for students and be the kind of disciple I am challenging them to be. The depth of my relationship with Christ will, in most cases, determine theirs.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is best communicated in the context of a relationship.

Prayer is essential for successful ministry and therefore needs to be at the forefront of every aspect of my life and ministry.

I am called to be a husband and father as well as a minister. I need to honor my wife and children with words and actions.

Ministry Values:

Ministries need to be designed to meet the students in a way that connects with their level of spiritual commitment and affinity to draw them closer to Christ.

Students need to feel like they belong in order to really commit. Ministries need to recognize that need and nurture belonging.

Ministry is a team sport. Committed and well-trained volunteers are vital for the success of any ministry.

Students have the capacity for leadership and need to be given meaningful leadership roles.

All teaching and discipleship must be based on solid, biblical truth.

Success is determined primarily by students' spiritual growth.

Programming:

When it comes to the actual programming of youth ministry I take a hybrid approach that mixes ministry targeted at different levels of spiritual maturity and commitment as well as different affinity groups. For example, I might do a discipleship Bible study that is strictly for students who are spiritually committed and ready for leadership roles and

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at the same time I might run a video-game ministry that attracts from all different faith levels, but brings students in because of their affinity for video games.

The reason I do this because students are radically diverse and the days when a one-size-fits-all ministry is not as effective as it once was. If students, especially those who are unchurched, are to experience the Gospel, then we need to bring it to them in a way that they are willing to be receptive. Some students thrive on deeper, committed programming, while others are not ready for that. The reality is that one program cannot meet all needs and reach all youth.

This approach to ministry is, by its very nature, reliant on volunteers who are committed to their faith and to discipling students. I seek out volunteers who are both of those things, and help equip them to minister to the students on their own. The reality is that I can be relational with a large number of kids, but can really only make a significant impact on a smaller group. To maximize the impact of the ministry volunteers are needed. I believe very strongly that a volunteer can have just as much impact on a student's life and faith as a paid youth worker. In fact, their impact can be even greater if they are equipped and encouraged to do so.

This approach is also very contextual. What works in one church might not work in another church. Interests, spiritual maturity and a number of other factors will influence the direction of the ministry more than what another church is doing or what has or has not worked at another church in the past.