



## Hillside's Junior High Ministry:

*Striving to build genuine and grounded followers of Christ that are active participants in His Body.*

### PARTNERSHIP

Youth ministry works best as an added support to a foundation that can only come from parents and families. I am here to partner with you, the parent, to help support the spiritual growth of your student. While a level of independence is being grown at this stage of life, the junior high leaders and I know that an "outsider's" example, listening ear, and words of advice can be beneficial. With that said, we know these can only go so far...they are the added nutrients to a soil (a culture) that is largely defined by the family.

We want to partner *with* you, not just as a two-pronged approach (the leaders and I supporting them in church, and you, the parents, supporting them in the rest of life), but by involving you in their church/ministry life as we get involved in their "real" life. We are confident that the old myth that junior highers don't like talking to adults is false, that REAL ministry is done when both young adults and parents (along with peers) can weigh in with their thoughts and support, giving a more holistic approach to growth and the role of the church. A Scriptural and historical view of the church points to a unity within the body of believers, no matter the age. In Acts 2:46-47, we see a picture of families, all age groups, meeting together daily in homes and at the temple to build each others' relationship with God.

We seek to accomplish this in three ways. First, we hold our Junior High Sunday service later in the afternoon so that your Junior Highers can go to main service with you and participate with the larger body of Christ. Further, in both our Sunday afternoon "ReWired" Junior High service and "Infuse" in-home Bible study small groups on Wednesday nights, we try to hold a 1:1 balance of young adult and parent volunteers.

### "INCARNATIONAL" MINISTRY

Jesus decided the best way to do ministry was to live with and among the people he came to serve. He talked, walked, and ate with these people, involving himself in their "real" lives. I want to be sure, in order to help grow authentic and grounded followers of Christ, that we (the Junior High leaders and I) are meeting these Junior Highers realistically where they are, not just where we want them to be. In our performance-

based world, from grades and teaching-to-a-test to sports and music and drama (not to mention all of the social pressures Junior High presents on top of this!), I want this ministry to be a place where the students can be authentic with their leaders; a place where they can ask questions and be heard; a place where deep relationships that are not based on performance can be built.

With the amount of compartmentalization among youths today, a goal of ours is for this ministry community to blend beyond the borders of “church” into regular life for these students. This means leaders showing up at a game or final concert, throwing out a supportive text the day of a test, or going out on small group outings from time to time. These types of relationships are the ones that dramatically shape and form lives to become more like Christ, as we lead more like Christ.

Our “Infuse” in-home small groups are focused on making this happen. We do this by listening weekly to the students’ stories, worries, excitements, and fears, and giving them a chance to dialogue with us through how Scripture and Christian ideals match with their real life. By keeping the student to leader ratio at around 4:1 and equipping each group with one young adult leader and one parent leader, along with teaching the students to inquire and actively participate in their learning of Scripture, we hope to blur the lines between “church” and the rest of their lives...translating the Gospel to flesh.

## ENVIRONMENT

We want this Junior High ministry to be loads of fun for your students. We know that fun activities and a strong social outlet are of great importance to this age-group, and as heirs of Christ, we want to be examples that live a hope-filled, excited, and abundant life that is packed to the brim with a joy that surpasses understanding. With that said, we strive to create an environment where the *largest* draw for the students is not entertainment or amusement, but a Christ-centered atmosphere (from which joy flows). We are committed to building an environment where those serious about the faith (*wherever* they are along that journey) are the trend-setters.

While fun and games can be an important part of building a Christ-centered community, it can easily become the central focus in youth ministry. When, according to statistics from the Barna Group, 60% of students that grow up in youth ministries fall away from their faith after graduating High School, it is clear that the old model of “fun first” does not translate to an authentic and sustained faith. We know that what will truly draw students in, build them up, and help them grow over a long period of time, is a community that is committed to and dependent on the appeal of the Gospel, along with leaders that passionately live out personal walks with their Savior. This environment characterized by passionate striving for God’s kingdom and living it out in real ways, is the best thing we can offer to these students in this over-stimulated and over-entertained culture.

## Junior High Weekly Events

- 1) **Intergenerational Worship**— In response to the research and observations mentioned above, we want Junior High students to participate in one of the Main Worship Services where they can worship alongside their parents and other adults each weekend. Service times are: Saturday 5:30pm and Sunday 8:30AM and 10:15AM. This involvement will hopefully lead to the participation in a community of believers from different age groups and maturity levels. This intergenerational worship will also be a focus in service and social Junior High events throughout the year.
- 2) **Rewired Junior High (Sundays: 1:30-3PM @ Family Center)**— We also know that Junior High students are facing issues today that need to be dealt with specifically. Though being part of a larger body of believers is important, it is still instrumental for Junior Highers to build a community of peers to walk through life with. That is why we hold a service with their peers that addresses their stage of life more directly. This takes place Sundays in the Family Center from 1:30pm-3pm.
- 3) **Infuse Groups (Wednesdays: 6:30-8:30PM in homes)**—To help the content sink in in a more relational, conversational, and impactful way, we have Infuse small groups that meet in homes off-campus. These groups focus on Bible literacy and give students a safe place that seeks Truth and allows them to ask questions, process doubts, and develop relationships with both their peer group, and also with caring adults. Out of all of the ministry events that take place, these seem to help bolster and support a steady and authentic Christian walk the most! The Infuse meetings are held in local homes on Wednesdays from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

If you have any questions about this ministry or anything else, please don't hesitate to contact me! I am available for phone calls and meetings every week. I look forward to partnering with you as you embark on the great adventure of raising adolescents to be active and authentic members of the body of Christ.

All for Him!



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-Brandon Bathauer

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