

Grades 7-12

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2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

The LWA Youth, along with several adult volunteers provide an ongoing monthly community service project with the Department of Child Services (DCS).

On the **3rd** Saturday of each month we meet at **10:00am** at the DCS offices located at 1201 South Alma School Road (on the SE corner of Alma School and Southern Ave.

We typically spend about an hour or so cleaning the family visitation rooms and the toys that the children play with

Greetings!



This past week, we learned how Guilt & Bitterness can hold us back from moving forward and living the life that God has planned for us.

We discussed some things we have done that we regretted doing and feel guilty about. We also discussed some things that others have done to us that we have trouble forgiving them for and feel bitterness toward them.

To help understand what Guilt & Bitterness does to us, we looked at the parable that Jesus tells in **Luke 15:11-32** about the prodigal son or lost son.

We discussed the guilt that the younger son felt. He felt so guilty for what he did that he felt he didn't even deserve to be called his father's son. He returned to his father and asked to be treated as one of his servants. His father, however, not only was not angry with his son, he accepted him back joyfully and even celebrated his return with a huge party.

We said that this part of the story shows us that no matter what we have done or how guilty we feel about it, our heavenly Father's **UNCONDITIONAL** love is always more powerful. We should never, ever, ever be afraid to come to God and ask for his forgiveness no matter what we have done or how guilty we feel about it.

We then talked about the older brother in the story. He felt so angry and bitter about his father's reaction to his younger brother's return that he refused to go in to the party for him.

We said that both sons were given the same from the father but the older son let his feelings of bitterness keep him from **joining the party**.

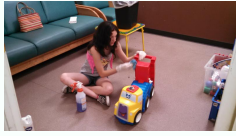
We talked about how carrying these feelings of guilt & bitterness with us is like going through life carrying heavy bags along with us and the longer we carry them the heavier they feel. We were reminded that we generally get more of what we focus on and these feelings begin to draw our focus to themselves and away from God bringing only more negative feelings to carry. They hold us back and keep us from moving forward and living the amazing life God has planned for us. **They keep us from joining God's party.**

We said that many times we may think we have forgiven somebody and let go of the bitterness but then it all comes right back the next time we see them or even hear their name. We said the only way to completely let go of these feelings and be fully healed is to take it to God through what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Everyone then had the opportunity to privately write down anything that we felt guilty about or any bitterness we held against someone else. We also included any other negative feelings we may have holding us back such as Shame, Envy, Anger, Condemnation, Worry, Hate, Regret, etc.

while they are there.

Please join us and be a part of this blessing we bring to these children, to their families and to the tireless workers at DCS.



Life Skills Class

Our Youth Life Skills class with Tom is every Wednesday night at 7pm for all Youth grades 7-12.

Don't miss these great lessons that you can immediately apply to your own every day life.

We then held our cards and prayed for God to forgive us for whatever it was we wrote down and asked the Holy Spirit to show us how to receive God's forgiveness and let go of any feelings of guilt. We also prayed for the Holy Spirit to show us how to forgive others and release any bitterness we held toward them.

We then shredded our cards in a paper shredder as a symbol that we were completely letting these things go, as if they never existed, and we were not going to continue to carry them with us into 2017 so we can start living the amazing life God has planned for us from the beginning.

Upcoming Events!

Watch for more exciting youth events coming soon!

Personal Care Items Drive:

Thank you for the outpouring of God's love through your donations in our "Toiletries for Teens" program over the Christmas season.

1 Youth is now continuing to collect "Personal Care Items" for the teens in foster care throughout the year. Items for both male and female teens are being collected in the two bins just outside our youth room. These items will be sorted into personal bags and given to DCS to be distributed to teens who may not even have their own tooth brush or comb.

Whenever you're out shopping for your own personal care items such as soap, deodorant, tooth paste, feminine hygiene items or when you see the "travel size" shampoo, mouthwash, etc., pick up a few extra items and drop them in the bins.

Help share God's love by letting these teens know that somebody really does care about them.

Bible verses referenced in this lesson: Luke 15:11-32, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Let us know if you have any questions.

Have a blessed Week,

Chris & Michelle Miller
1 Youth Ministry