

Zarephath Student Ministry

Zarephath Student Ministry has a 'Big Win' which is how we measure success. We 'win' when a student begins to own his/her faith in Jesus and joins God on His mission to reach every man, woman and child with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do this partnering with parents and discipling young people to love, live and serve as Jesus did.

Here is a quick glance at the past year:

Splitting Middle and High School Groups: After much prayer and plenty of meetings, we decided that it would be best to split up our middle and high school gatherings. Even when something is being done well, it doesn't always mean it's being done best. In an effort to point students to Jesus in the best way possible, focusing in closely on where they're at in life and allowing for a small group setting, we now meet separately. We intentionally have some of our larger events together so that younger and older students can have the opportunity to experience one another.

Middle School meets on Sunday mornings. We have seen tremendous success with this group and oftentimes we are ready to burst out of the room we are currently meeting in. We have found that we are reaching more middle school age students than we were before the switch, and we are also discipling in a deeper way since this setting allows us to focus more intentionally on this specific age group.

We have placed this gathering during the 9am service so that families can worship together at the 11:30am services. **Family Worship Weekend** takes place one Sunday a month where middle school doesn't meet at all to encourage all families to worship together corporately in the main service.

High School meets on Friday nights in the Zarephath Ministry Center. This has been a unique season for the high schoolers as Friday night has been the most noticeable change from what it used to be. In an effort to maximize our time together on Friday nights, we have tightened up our agenda and put a lot of weight on small group time so that vibrant relationships and mentorship can be formed.

Our Philosophy Succeeding: In order to achieve our 'Big Win' (above), we must allow for every student who walks in the door to have (1) a safe person and (2) a safe place. This encourages the discipleship process by building up trust and allowing our leaders to point students to Jesus. Over the past year or so, we have seen this philosophy come to be. Our focus on small group times during regular gatherings, small group hangouts outside of our meetings and individual meetings with students has allowed the vibrant relationships, deep conversations and students stepping towards Jesus.

New Student Ministry Assistant: Collin Fitzgerald was hired in August of 2016 and has been a tremendous addition to the Student Ministry team. Collin cares deeply that middle and high school students know and love Jesus. As of January, he is the team leader of the middle school ministry and will be assuming more of a role in high school ministry over Spring 2017. Fall Retreat: 115 students and many leaders had a fantastic weekend away at Camp Orchard Hill. This is the most we have ever had on our Fall Retreat! God was at work!

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Student Missions

Global - ZSM partnered with New Life Nicaragua this past summer, spending 8 days with a 16 person team in Cristo Rey and the surrounding areas. Four houses were built and other ministry was done.

Local - ZSM partnered once again with Center for Student Missions, this summer in Detroit. A group of 24 students went to service on this successful trip. A trip to Boston is on the schedule for 2017.

Future

Deepen Partnership with Parents: In 2017 and beyond, we plan to make a strong effort to partner with parents in a new way. This consists of seasonal parenting breakfasts, weekly updates so that ZSM and parents can stay connected and also creating a resource center for the parents of our middle and high school students.

Weekend Hospitality

Hospitality is rooted in the gospel and our weekend teams take that seriously. All weekend teams strive towards a 'Culture of Hospitality' that consists of competency, courtesy, connection and compassion. This type of excellence isn't done to make ZCC look good, but to put the love of Christ on display for all who join us to feel comfortable, welcomed and loved.

Weekend Hospitality Teams

Info Hub - led by Gilda Webster

When the front of the building opened, the Info Hub became the actual hub to our building. All of the information that you need at ZCC can be found here and the team is well informed.

Parking - led by Freddy Rosario

Greeters - led by Randi Jennings & Jane Soffer

Ushers - led by Jon Boczar

Volunteers Needed: All of our Weekend Teams need more help! Our teams are integral to what we do on the weekends and make a tremendous impact on those who join us every Saturday and Sunday. This is far from a 'fill this spot' type of volunteering! All of our weekend teams have the opportunity to put the gospel on display and point people to Jesus.

Special Thanks: Our faithful volunteers who serve selflessly, even when we are short staffed - you're appreciated!

Life Groups

Before the foundation of the world, community existed within the Godhead. In the first human relationship to ever be created, God's intention was unity. Since then, sin has entered the world and mankind has been broken but the original intent of mankind has remained the same. We have been created for togetherness to the glory of God! In fact, community is where Christians grow and thrive, where skeptics and new believers can experience vibrant, loving faith and where disciples of Christ can lean on one another through thick and thin. Biblical community looks like broken people, coming from different background, struggling with different things, all joining together with one common purpose- to pursue Jesus together.

A great number of those who attend ZCC on the weekends are not sharing life together in some type of relational context throughout the week. This isn't good. Relationships are the indispensable element for disciple making and sanctification (spiritual growth). So therein lies a question: what do we do about this problem at ZCC? In order to be a catalytic church that continues to see conversions but also helps followers of Jesus to grow deeper in Christ-likeness, what should be done to encourage this type of community? We believe that Jesus effectively modeled the method for effective ministry by selecting a small group of twelve men whom He discipled (see Luke 6:12-14). His strategy involved building relationships and investing Himself in these men over a certain period of time to equip them to do the same. We have implemented this model at ZCC with something called Life Groups.

We currently have 12 existing groups across central NJ. All of these groups serve this purpose of *Pursuing Jesus Together* through:

Connection: creating authentic relationships in community (Acts 2:42-47)

Unity: strengthening the common bond in Christ (John 17, Proverbs 27:17, Phil 2:1-3)

Growth: becoming more like Christ together (John 17:17, Proverbs 27:17, Romans 12:1-2)

All groups have the following components:

Fellowship/Connection

Prayer

Bible Content

Accountability

Service

Multiplication

Special thanks to all of our Life Group Leaders, Coaches and Apprentices!

Zarephath Young Adults

At Zarephath, we recognize the immense pressure that culture puts on young adults to conform to the status quo. We aim to renew a passion in the hearts and minds of those in colleges and in their twenties for the gospel of Jesus Christ and its extreme relevance in our day to day lives.

Young adults have been gathering once a month for the past few years. As of August 2016, we shifted to having the third Saturday service of every month be driven by young adults, followed by a laid back gathering afterwards. We have seen a great response to this.

The future holds even more change as we look to optimize how we reach young adults and how we handle our young adult gatherings. There is an urgency to reach the next generation for Jesus and oftentimes those who are studying at a university, young professionals and young couples fall through the cracks. With the idea that all truth is relative truth captivating the millennial generation, this mission is of extreme importance at Zarephath. It's our prayer that God uses us for the sake of many young adults knowing Jesus and reciprocating by spreading His fame throughout this generation. More to come!