



Parents,

I have some exciting news that I would like to share with you about what is happening in Student Ministry! This past year, we were blessed to see great growth in our Jr High program on Wednesday nights. So much growth, in fact, that we are on the verge of outgrowing our space! God is so good! Our Family Ministry Team and I have been deliberating on how to continue to partner with God and the growth He is bringing to our students, and we have decided that effective September 17th, we will be combining our Jr High students with our Sr High students for an incredible weekly student experience on Sunday nights that will allow us to continue to grow and live into our vision to infuse passion for Jesus into the students of Westmoreland County.

We believe this change is necessary because...

- We believe that God is changing the lives of our students in powerful ways, and we don't want to run out of seats for students who need what only Jesus can provide. We noticed that our attendance capped at about 45 students on Wednesday nights. There are so many ministries occupying the building on Wednesday nights that there would not be room to expand to accommodate a ministry of 90 students. On Sunday nights, we will be able to accommodate nearly 200 students. We want to provide the space for God to do a great work!
- We believe in creating engaging, safe environments that are designed specifically for students. We often have to share spaces with other ministries, which limits our ability to provide a student-specific environment that everyone wants to be part of. During pickup/dropoff times, we were not able to control who could potentially rubbing shoulders with our students. We will primarily be the only ministry using the building on Sunday nights.

We believe this change will be great because...

- We believe in building relationships through small groups. We have not been able to provide enough time for our small groups to bond together during Student Ministry programming. Because we will meet for two hours instead of an hour and a half, we have the opportunity to provide more time for our groups to meet and more time for discipleship to happen.
- We believe in connecting with God through worship. Music has a unique and powerful place in the life of a teenager. God has wired teenagers to connect to Him through music in powerful ways. When we have done worship in the past with our students, we had to sacrifice part of our programming or rush through it in order to fit everything in. Now, our worship environments will have enough time and space to allow for such connection. Sunday nights provide the best environment for such worship.
- We believe Jr High and Sr High students have been wired by God uniquely, and both bring value to one another. God has gifted Jr High students with such energy and joy that is contagious. God has gifted Sr High students with maturity and thoughtfulness that is inspiring. Blending these two groups will spur our students on to such passion for Jesus!
- We believe that God is calling us to reach students who are not part of church. Sunday nights are typically the night of the week where the most students are free, and therefore will be able to reach the most students. We also believe that church should be fun, where you can connect with friends socially, with consistent, caring, Godly adults, and with Jesus spiritually.

How this change affects your family...

- As the parent of a Jr High student, your meeting day has changed from Wednesday nights to Sunday nights. Our meetings will also be two hours long, instead of an hour and a half. There will be shared hangout spaces and large group environments with the Sr High students, while small groups will still be separated by age and gender. Your students will in most cases have the same small group leaders. Our leaders will be present in every environment to ensure that every student feels safe, is having fun, and connecting to peers and to Jesus.
- As the parent of a Sr High student, your meeting time has extended from an hour and a half to two hours. This allows for more time to connect with each other in small groups. Our Sr High students will be sharing spaces with younger students, which will provide them with opportunities to lead and set the example for others.
- As the parent of both Jr and Sr High students, your life has been made easier. Now, both your students can attend Student Ministry at the same time, on the same night. We believe in partnering with parents, not working against each other, for the benefit of our students knowing Jesus and receiving eternal life.

Here's how you can help...

- Ask questions. I'd love to help you understand as completely as you need so you can be advocates of Student Ministry and help communicate this change to others. If there are specific ways this may impact your family, please ask.
- Pray. For our families, for our leaders, and for the students of Westmoreland County we will be reaching through our Student Ministry. Pray that God would continue to amaze us with the stories of life change happening in our students.
- Commit to partnering with us as we seek to infuse passion for Jesus into the students of Westmoreland County. Bring your students to our events. Invite families and students in your circles of influence to be part of what God is doing through Student Ministry during the summer and school year.

Timeline

- 6/4 – Summer Parent Gathering.
- 6/4 – Summer Nights. Our programming during the summer for Student Ministry will meet from 6-8pm on Sunday nights in June, July, and August. Big games, themed nights, food, all your friends, and much more! This is for all students in 6-12th grade. There will not be any meetings on Wednesday nights.
- 9/10 – Fall Kickoff @ Statler's.
- 9/17 – Student Ministry Launch. This will be our first week under the new format. We will have weekly worship, teaching, and small groups beginning this week.

We are believing that the best is yet to come for our students, and that this will create an overall experience for our students, leading them to a deeper relationship with God. Thank you for all that you do for our students. Your influence in their lives is irreplaceable and incredibly valuable. We are for Westmoreland!

In Christ,

Andrew