

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?



CREW NOTES

Hey everyone!

Welcome back to a new teaching series in Youth! Last month was awesome, talking all things 'Back to Reality', as our youth headed back to school. We had some amazing Crews and conversations, about what it means to make the most of the upcoming school year, and what we can be believing for in the year ahead. Do check back in with your youth about these goals and dreams as we head through the rest of the year!

As we head into October, we're going to be starting a new series, called 'Are You Ready For This'? There's something special about preparing yourself for something significant. Whenever you have an important meeting, a job interview or a first date, your preparation is much more detailed than on other days. This is because you are getting ready for something significant. As a youth ministry, we believe God wants to do something of real significance in our country, and this month we're going to talk about it what it means for all of us to be ready and expectant!

The overall aim of this series is that we look at the possibilities of what God can do through us, and imagine how much we could impact society if we were ready for God to work through us as a youth ministry. We've been talking all year about what it means to positively shape society, but here is where we get serious about expecting God to see change in the world we live in.

We'll be talking about the power of an invitation, the importance of each of us playing our part, and the challenge of reaching out to the people in our world with the message of Jesus. These are really big topics, so be expectant and prayerful that your Crews this month could be life-changing for the young people you lead.

This has the potential to be one of the most impactful series of the year, as it is all about the amazing power of God, and how it has been made available to us in Jesus. God wants to do miraculous things through us and through our young people - the question is, are you ready for this

As you prepare to lead your Crew this month, have a think about these questions:

- Why is it important for our youth to be prepared and ready for what God wants to do in and through them?**
- How can we best prepare ourselves to be used by God?**
- What is the role of unity, and how can we best stay unified as a community in our pursuit of the things of God?**

**Have a great month!
Hillsong YxYA Teaching Team**



Week 1 // THE POWER OF AN INVITATION

I have a friend who absolutely hates turning up to an event uninvited. The only time she will go to an event is if she's received an actual invite from the person who's organising it! Why? Her response is always the same: "I don't want to go somewhere I'm not wanted." You see, an invitation sends a very clear message - it says "we want you here" It lets a person know that they belong and are wanted.

As human beings we are designed to need and be needed, to want and to be wanted; it is a part of who we are, yet too often we fail to acknowledge this desire within ourselves and then sadly overlook it in others. As a church, we always throw out the phrase "you belong here", because we know that belonging is a cry from the heart of everyone. We all long to belong!

Last month we spoke to our young people about going back to school as influencers, so this month let's put in their hands the tool of the invitation. An invitation is an incredibly powerful tool, as it gives people access to something that they currently don't have access to. But an important question to ask is how well we are representing what we are inviting them to? If the invitation is rubbish, ugly or boring, chances are there is 0% chance you will attend, so this week lets first talk about the why invitation is so crucial.

It is so easy to go to event after event, Sunday after Sunday and assume that people know what you are a part of, and for you to assume they are not interested. But perhaps the reality is that you just never stepped out, understanding the power of an invitation. Or maybe you did once, and their one 'no' meant that you never asked them again. The beauty of an invitation is that it provides opportunity; an opportunity for somebody to have an experience, to be a part of something, an opportunity for your "God thing" to become theirs. Through an invitation, all of a sudden, the good news of Jesus is no longer for an exclusive crowd; its for anybody and everybody.

Ultimately, we are all about reaching the lost, and providing an environment for them to come into church life. But if we don't invite the lost, how do we expect them to come? How do we expect them to know that they can belong, and that church is for them?

In 1 Samuel 22:23, David says to a guy called Abiathar who is running from Saul, "Stay here with me, and don't be afraid. I will protect you with my own life." Abiathar was probably scared and lonely, but David was confident in inviting him into the community he was a part of (because he was a part of building it). In that instant, Abiathar's whole future changed. He was brought into a safe place, a winning side and community of people who were just as imperfect as he was. Imagine if we could all do this for the people in our world?

Questions:

- Think of a time when you received an invitation. How did it make you feel, and what was the significance of it?



Week 2 // OUR COMMUNITY

Have you ever heard about 'swimming against the tide'? This is a very common expression which literally means to go against the popularly held opinion, or to act differently to the majority of others. This a great image of what our role as Christians in our communities should be like. We should aim to not conform to the ways of our society but actually aim to show them the light that we have within us, and look to positively change it with the message of Jesus.

Being a child of God comes with the responsibility of being the light in our communities, however it is often hard to put this into practice, especially in a world that is often opposed to the message of Jesus. In Matthew 5: 14-16 the Bible actually describes what this can look like. It says that "God is not a secret to be kept", and that by each and every one of us going public about the good news of Jesus, we will be able to prompt other people to open up with God.

In Acts 2:47, the Bible says that there was something so special about the church community that:

"Each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved."

That must be the aim of what we do as a church; that we too build a community that attracts the blessing of God and allows him to add to daily. The church described in Acts 2 was not afraid of prioritising the love of God, and so the Lord added to their number daily, and more people were able to find God and be saved.

You don't need to be a pastor with a microphone in your hands and a stage to preach on to be able to speak about God's light. In fact, you should make the most out of the tools that you have in your hands right now! Something as simple as showing kindness to someone we don't usually speak to in school or perhaps catching up with a friend, being generous or even inviting them along to a youth night or church service. Earlier in Acts 2, it mentions that everyone around 'was in awe' of all the wonders that God had done through the apostles. You could be the method in which God answers someone's prayer and be the reason why someone else was able to encounter Jesus!

Being ready to step into our communities is about having a willing heart and being open vessels, giving space for God to do what only He can do. These are all ways in which we can all swim against the tide and choose to positively shape a society where people are increasingly isolated - what an opportunity to be the light in the darkness, and provide hope for people who are hopeless!

Questions:

- Are you ready to 'swim against the tide', stepping into your community and being the light?
- How do you think that looks practically?



Week 3 // WHO WILL YOU BRING?

On the 2nd and 9th November, we have our United nights in London and Newcastle, where we come together as youth in one location, to worship and unite around the mission of impacting our society. And it wouldn't be right to have talked about the power of an invitation and the importance of community without having a week to pray and think about who we can be inviting!

This week, we will be discussing how God can use us to bring people to United Night. Encourage your young people to remind themselves of the day they entered into relationship with Jesus - maybe they were invited to church, or they were brought along by family. But for all of us, there has been a time when we have stepped into an environment of faith and had an amazing encounter with God! Allow that memory to stir up the faith that we can share the experience we had with other people, so they can experience the same joy and freedom that we walk in daily with Jesus.

There's a story in John 4, in which Jesus interacts with a Samaritan woman. Jesus meets the Samaritan women by a well and they engage in a conversation which leads to Jesus telling her everything she ever did. She is astounded by his insight, and after discovering he is the Messiah, she immediately runs into her town and shares her testimony of Jesus. The people in the town believed in Jesus, not only for the wise words he shared with them, but because of the woman's testimony. The Samaritan woman did not hold back the revelation she had of who Jesus is; she shared her experience with the people around her, so they too could have the same life-changing experience that she had with Jesus.

The Samaritan woman could have used excuses to hinder her from sharing her testimony, but she chose to step out in faith. She didn't know what their response would be, yet she chose to extend the invitation, knowing that they too would have their lives changed if they accepted. God can use you to reach the people in your community to enter a relationship with Jesus. Although it can be difficult at times, choose to be courageous and take a step of faith by sharing your testimony of Jesus to people and invite them to enter a relationship with Jesus.

Like the Samaritans in the town, sometimes all people need is an invitation. When people accept the invitation, God will work in the hearts of people to bring them into relationship with him. We get to be used as God's agents to invite people to encounter Jesus, and we get to watch how they experience the joy of knowing Jesus.

Questions:

- How did you enter a relationship with Jesus?
- What is the importance of sharing our testimony with people?
- Who are some of the people in your community that you can bring to the United Night?

