



## Discover Ways to Renew the 'Spark' of Kids' Faith



"Apathy is a sort of living oblivion," wrote 19<sup>th</sup>-century editor Horace Greeley. A common refrain from many parents is that their teenagers are lackluster, or hard to "fire up"—especially when it comes to God and the church. Ironically, the apathy epidemic today just may have its roots in overactivity.

"With so much going on for school and traveling teams, [kids] have no time for church, youth groups, and even family time," says one youth minister in *Group Magazine's* "State of Youth Ministry" report. "Kids are getting pulled in so many directions." Other respondents said their biggest struggles are kids whose lives are compartmentalized and who don't make Christ a priority for daily living.

Youth ministers said they're dying for teenagers who are engaged and passionate about their faith, ready and willing to commit their lives to Jesus. On the positive side, they said they've noticed a hunger among today's teenagers for "deeper" things, as well as a move from "flash" to substance.

So how can you fan the flames of your kids' faith and convince them to invest in it 100 percent? First, lift up your teenagers in prayer often. The Holy Spirit is the one with the power to change hearts and lives. Next, make faith applicable to everyday life. Don't limit talk of God to Sundays. Tie in Scripture to issues that kids face at home, at school, and in their activities and jobs. Make Christ a priority in your own life, and show kids by example what a committed Christian walk looks like. If necessary, cut back your busy schedule to focus more on God. Finally, harness kids' hunger to go deeper by asking them tough questions and issuing spiritual challenges. Teenagers seeking a cause won't find a better one than Christ.

### The United Methodist Perspective

John Wesley didn't set out to create a new denomination. Instead, he sought revival in the Anglican Church. But because of his extreme methods and message, he was pushed out into the fields to preach. This movement eventually grew into the United Methodist Church. Describing his success, Wesley said, "Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn." Not only did people watch Wesley burn, but many joined in his pleas for justice, service, and action-filled faith.

If we want kids to "burn," they need role models who are on fire. This can't be completely farmed out to churches and other organizations, though. As Christian Smith notes in *Soul Searching*, parents haven't lost their influence in shaping the lives of their teenagers. Parents must take ownership of guiding their kids' faith journey.

Shine and catch on fire with enthusiasm for God. Although your kids may not act like it, they want parents who live their faith out loud and without shame. Let them see you burn, and perhaps they'll stand close enough to catch fire, too.

—Hank Hilliard, Young People's Ministries, [hhilliard@GBOD.org](mailto:hhilliard@GBOD.org)



**Check out these interesting statistics about how brightly people's fires are burning for God:**

- Sixty percent of Christian teenagers lose interest in church activities and organized religion, despite their previous participation. (Barna Group)
- Researcher George Barna uses the term "casual Christians" to describe the two-of-out-three adults who are spiritually middle-of-the-road or even ambivalent about their faith.
- On the positive side, in a survey of almost 30,000 Christian teenagers from last summer, the majority of kids were passionate about their faith. Seventy-seven percent of Christian teenagers disagreed with this statement: "I've met a lot of people who seem more interesting to me than Jesus does." (*Group Magazine*)



**Write it  
down!**



## Summer Happenings

**Cornerstone Christian  
Music Festival Senior Trip  
June 28th thru July 3rd**

**Adventures in Mission Trip  
to Dallas, TX  
will be mid-July  
Specific information will  
be coming soon.**

**MOVE Conference  
for High School students  
July 26th thru July 30**

## Freedom in Christ study starts March 3

Beginning March 1, Terrie Johnson and Duane Willis will lead a new small group study, *Freedom in Christ*, for high school youth. This 13-week course will meet Wednesdays from 6-7:30 PM and is focused on helping teens recognize and practice who they are in Christ, resulting in the true freedom and peace Christ wanted us to have when he said, "**Peace** I leave with you; my **peace** I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:27). For more info, check out the Freedom in Christ Ministries website at <http://www.freedominchrist.com/>



## Verse of the Month

**"Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of [the believers]. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:3-4)**

On Pentecost, known as the church's birthday, the early Christians were literally set aflame for God. Thanks to the Holy Spirit's power and presence, more than 3,000 people were added to the church that day. The same Holy Spirit can work miracles in hearts and lives even now.

## Going Deeper

**Want to help your teenagers "blaze with passion" for God? Read this insightful essay by youth minister Mike Kupferer, posted on [SimplyYouthMinistry.com](http://SimplyYouthMinistry.com).**

After cleaning up debris in my yard for three days, I had two large piles of brush to burn. The first pile ignited after I added an outside source (dry paper), and the fire never went out. I had to keep watch over the flames to keep them controlled, but I never had to relight it. No matter what I threw on top of the fire, it just kept burning. I couldn't extinguish it. Finally, it grew smaller and smaller once I ran out of items to burn. Even once I thought it was dying, all I had to do was add something flammable and it would immediately catch on fire.

The second pile was a little more frustrating. I added dry paper and sticks to get it going. It would catch on fire for a minute, and then the flame would go out. I kept adding more and more pieces of paper, sticks, and anything else I thought would catch on fire. Each time it burned for only a little bit. I had to constantly watch it if I wanted it to keep burning, because if I walked away for long, it would go out.

Then I remembered this principle: I know God is the One who ultimately molds and shapes young people, but the reality is that we have a responsibility to encourage and challenge them, too. And because of that, you cannot handle two fires the same way.

Some kids need a constant flow of outside resources to help their fires for God to burn. Without outside help, they will quickly become apathetic toward God. Then there are the kids who consume whatever is given to them and burn more intensely for God. When you challenge and stretch them, they aren't overwhelmed—they excel. One thing is true about both types of kids, though. Without something in their lives to help them burn, they'll lose their passion for God. Care enough to not give up. Fuel the fire, and never stop.



## MUSIC SPOTLIGHT



Lady Antebellum

### Mainstream Artist

**Background:** This country band formed in 2006 and got their big break singing backup on a Jim Brickman song. Lady Antebellum's debut album went platinum, and their recent follow-up debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard charts. They were named 2009's best new country music group.

**Albums:** *Need You Now* (2010), *Lady Antebellum* (2008)

**What Parents Should Know:** "Hello World" talks about seeing God's miracles in life. But the group sometimes sings of being drunk and having one-night stands, too.

**What Lady Antebellum Says:** Singer Hillary Scott says the hit single "Need You Now" is about the ups and downs of relationships. "[We] know what it's like to get to that point where you feel lonely enough that you make a late-night phone call that you...could regret the next day," she says.

**Discussion Questions:** When do you feel lonely? Why is loneliness so devastating? What are some different ways people deal with loneliness? Read aloud Isaiah 41:9-10. How does God make his presence known in our lives? What are some productive ways to combat feelings of loneliness? How can you seek out people who are lonely?



Starfield

### Christian Artist

**Background:** These award-winning Canadian rockers rose from anonymity to become one of the biggest names in modern worship. They are staples of ministry conferences around the world.

**Albums:** *The Saving One* (2010), *Beauty in the Broken* (2006), *Starfield* (2004)

**What Parents Should Know:** This band has a heart for teenagers; they've led worship at the teen-centered Dare2Share events, as well as numerous youth ministry conferences. Their worship music is a mix of hard and soft but is always heartfelt and powerful.

**What Starfield Says:** Singer Tim Neufeld says the song "Rediscover You" is a spot-on description of his own journey with Christ. "I desperately find myself needing to rediscover the things of God—I want real, and I want passionate. I want to relearn 'walking by faith.'"

**Discussion Questions:** How often do you think about God? Why is it so easy to be distracted from spiritual thoughts? Read aloud Psalm 37:1-9. What promises and encouragement do these verses offer? How should we respond to God? What does it mean to walk by faith? How can you grow closer to God and trust him more?

## FILMWATCH

**Movie:** *Clash of the Titans* (releases April 2)

**Genre:** Action, Fantasy

**Rating:** Not yet rated

**Synopsis:** Born of a god but raised as a man, Perseus (Sam Worthington) loses his family to Hades (Ralph Fiennes), vengeful god of the underworld. With nothing left to lose, Perseus volunteers to lead a dangerous mission to defeat Hades before he can seize power from Zeus (Liam Neeson) and unleash hell on earth.

**Discussion Questions:** How powerful is Satan, compared to God? How would it affect your faith if God were vulnerable and could be defeated? Read aloud Mark 10:27. What do these verses say about God's power? Is God in control of everything that happens in our lives—even the bad stuff? Explain.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Drama Practice 5:00 PM FIC 6 PM Fusion Café 6:30 PM	Praise Band 5:30 PM	Believe Trip →	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sunday School 9:45 AM  Snack Supper 5-7 PM			Drama Practice 5:00 PM FIC 6 PM Fusion Café 6:30 PM	Praise Band 5:30 PM		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sunday School 9:45 AM Daylight Savings Time Begins! Snack Supper 5-7 PM			Drama Practice 5:00 PM FIC 6 PM Fusion Café 6:30 PM	Praise Band 5:30 PM		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sunday School 9:45 AM  <u>No Youth</u>	Spring Break Week for Nixa & Ozark		<u>No Wednesday Night Activities</u>	Praise Band?	ATF Trip →	
28	29	30	31			
Sunday School 9:45 AM  Snack Supper 5-7 PM			Drama Practice 5:00 PM FIC 6 PM Fusion Café 6:30 PM			



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