



Teen
Curriculum

with DVD

stickyfaith

10 lessons to
nurture faith beyond
high school

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ZONDERVAN

Sticky Faith Teen Curriculum

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how can i find a new church?

The Big Idea:

Finding a church or fellowship group after graduation is important to Sticky Faith.

You'll Need:

Optional: Photos (or even a slide show or video) that will trigger students' memories of what you've shared together. Odds are good you'll be doing this at some point before they graduate so you might as well get a jump on it now.

Pizza

Plates and napkins

Bibles

Copies of the **Questions about a Church or College Group** handout on page 98

Ideally, a handful of computers with Internet access

To research churches or fellowship groups near your students' future colleges, homes, or jobs. Some helpful Web links are listed in the **How** section; you might also want to look for churches or fellowship groups through your denominational network.

Ahead of time create a handout with the Web links in the **How** section, as well as any other denominational online information that you locate, and make copies for your students.

Invite whoever leads your college ministry to come for this meeting, at least for the final portion, as well as your senior pastor or some other adult in leadership (particularly if you don't have a college ministry) who can participate in the last part of the session, too.

Copies of students' previously completed **Identity That Sticks** handouts from session two

More Worship and Prayer Option: Pencils and paper

NOW

- Greet your students and get the conversation rolling by asking, **What will you miss about our youth group after you graduate?** If you'd like, distribute photos or play your slide show/video to help students reflect on the memories you've shared.

Whether or not you show photos or slides, share a few stories of some of your fondest memories about these seniors. Try to have at least one of those stories demonstrate how students have grown spiritually as you've journeyed together.

- Continue: **Let's be honest with each other: Once you graduate, whether or not you stay connected with our church or get connected to a new one or drift from church altogether will be up to you. Nearly half of seniors who graduate from youth groups like ours end up drifting from the church.¹ That's one out of two. Why do you think that is?**
- At some point as students are answering that question, get out your pizza. But before you hand out slices to students, explain: **Imagine this pizza is piping hot—way too hot to eat. In fact, it's so hot that if you ate it, it would burn**

your mouth. Begin putting individual slices on plates as you continue: **Short of putting the pizza in the refrigerator, I might try to cool it off by doing what I'm doing now and take individual pieces and put them on plates so they can cool separately. Each piece of pizza will cool more quickly if it's on its own.**

Hand out the pizza to students to eat as you ask: **How is that similar to what might happen to you if you drift from the church and Christian community after you graduate?**

NEW

At this point distribute Bibles and invite students to turn to Philippians 2:12-13. As they are doing so, explain: **My goal is not to make you feel so guilty that you'll get connected with a church or faith community after you graduate. Nor is it to scare you into doing so. Instead my goal is to show you how connecting with a faith community will help you by allowing you to be the person you want to be after you graduate.**

Ask for a volunteer to read Philippians 2:12-13. Walk students through the passage by making the following points and asking the following questions: **Note that this passage starts with the word *therefore*. Given that, we need to look backward in the text to see what is causing Paul's "therefore."** What does Paul describe in Philippians 2:5-11, and what's the connection to verses 12-13?

The phrase "work out your salvation" has been very confusing to folks throughout history. Some believe it means to "work *for* your salvation." (Feel free to refer back to what you discussed in session one on the gospel as you help students better understand that salvation by our work is impossible; it's Jesus' work on the

Real Reflections from Real Students

One youth group graduate who ended up being the president of her college campus fellowship reported, "I think one of the main reasons I got so involved in ministry was the first week I was on campus I was looking for one because my youth pastor encouraged me that I needed to find community as soon as possible. Don't put it on the back burner and don't skip church that first week, because it just makes it easier to skip it the second week and then the eighth week."

Real Reflections from Real Students

Don't wait at all. Start visiting churches as soon as school starts or before school starts if it's possible. There's no reason to hesitate. Visit many different churches in the first month, but then COMMIT to ONE!

cross that makes our salvation possible.) Even if we realize that Paul doesn't mean we should work "for" our salvation, it still can be tough to tell what Paul means by working "out" your salvation. What do you think Paul is after?

This isn't an easy concept to understand, but the essence of Paul's teaching is that once we choose to follow Jesus, we are saved. And yet, every day we continue to figure out and live out that new life in Christ.

NOTE: One comparison that might be helpful is to explain that it's like being accepted to a college. You're accepted the day the school writes you the acceptance letter. But then for the next four years (or in some cases, five or six or even seven years . . .), you "work out" (or experience) what it means to be a college student.

- Continue: **I want you to remember a few things when it comes to working out your salvation. First, these few verses are written to an entire group of Jesus followers. Second, I want you to think about the way our pizza slices cooled down when they were separated from each other. Given that, what role do you think other believers could play in you continuing to work out your salvation after you graduate?**

The big theme for today is that we don't have to live out our salvation alone. God wants us to live in community with other followers of Jesus. And even as you're graduating, the good news for all of us is that the more we in this youth ministry continue to stay in touch, the more likely it is that you'll have Sticky Faith.²

As your youth leader, I want to keep in touch with you. If you have a sense of how you'd like to keep in touch with your seniors (i.e., via email, social networking, phone calls, a dinner reunion at winter break), now would be a good time to share that. **And hopefully you know you can contact me any time.**

HOW

- Continue: **Having said that, the reality is that I can't go to your college or job or next city with you. I really want you to connect with other adults in**

a church or college group who can be part of the next chapter God has for you. In fact, the Sticky Faith research shows that connecting with older adults is part of what helps you develop Sticky Faith.

Continue: The people who can help you live out your salvation can be found in a local church or college ministry. Yet one of the top three difficulties seniors face when they graduate is finding a church or college group.³

Continue: To help each of you find a church, we're going to talk about the types of questions we should ask ourselves, and others, as we try to find a group that fits how God is helping us live out our salvation.

Distribute pencils and copies of the **Questions about a Church or College Group** handout and review it with your students. Be sure to highlight what's written at the top of the handout: There are no "right" answers. Some of your students will be drawn to a large group; others will prefer a smaller group. For some worship is a priority; for others, serving the poor gets top billing. The point is not to selfishly ask, "What can this church/group do for me?" but "How can God help me 'work out my salvation' through this church/group?"

NOTE: At the bottom of the handout is a space for "other" questions. Ask: **What else would you want to know about a campus group or church?**

Ask: It seems as though asking these questions could make us almost too picky, or feel more like customers trying to "purchase" something as opposed to followers of Christ trying to find a group to help them live out their salvation. How can you ask these questions but keep an open, humble attitude?

Explain: Youth group graduates like you often wish that their youth leader had done

Real Reflections from Real Students

I got involved in a college group, and then I realized it was wrong for me and at that point I was a bit disillusioned about the whole idea. I didn't really feel like going out and looking for another one and having the same negative experience. So before you get involved in the college group, before you get emotionally invested, make sure it's right for you and find people who're going to help you grow as a Christian. Once you find that group, get involved and stick with it.

Real Reflections from Real Students

While youth group seniors are in high school, they should try to research churches in the area of their college . . . because it's really hard to do it on your own.

a better job helping them find a church or college group.⁴ I don't want you to wish later on that I had done more to help you, so we're going to look for churches and college groups together today.

- At this point, show students the computers with online access and explain: **Using these computers, as well as your own phones, let's explore which churches and college groups are close to where you'll be living**

or working after graduation. Distribute the handouts you've prepared with the links, as well as any other links you've added. (NOTE: The reason we haven't made these links into a handout is that while the Web addresses are accurate as of the date of the printing of this book, they may change by the time you're using this session. So please double-check these links and do a bit of research yourself before distributing them to your students. Feel free to add links connected with your own church, ministry, or denominational affiliation.)

General Database Of College Ministries

www.liveabove.com

Fellowship Groups That Tend To Meet On College Campuses

Campus Crusade for Christ (now known as "Cru"):

www.ccci.org

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship: www.intervarsity.org/chapters

The Navigators: [http.navigators.org/us/ministries/college/
campus-locator](http://http.navigators.org/us/ministries/college/campus-locator)

Young Life College: [www.younglife.org/Locator/Default.htm?Search
By=Ministry&SearchFor=College](http://www.younglife.org/Locator/Default.htm?SearchBy=Ministry&SearchFor=College)

NOTE: If your denomination sponsors a particular campus ministry (e.g.,

how can i find a new church?

Christian Reformed Campus Ministry or Wesley Foundation), please research it ahead of time and add that to this list as well.

After you distribute the handouts, explain: **My hope is that each of you finds one, if not a handful, of ministries located near where you're going to live or attend college. On this handout, jot down any contact information or meeting schedules posted online.**

If none of the links relate to where you'll be after graduation, then simply Google your city, as well as the word *church*, to see what pops up. Feel free to also include our denomination in that online search. Click through the search results to check out the churches' individual Web sites. Jot down on this handout the name, location, and meeting schedule of any churches that seem interesting to you.

Give each student a chance to share one ministry or church that he or she thought appealing. If a student hasn't found something, then commit to that student that you'll work with him or her in the next week to find a church or ministry near where he or she will be living or working—and then make sure to follow through.

Have More Time?

At this point, introduce the leader of your church's college ministry and give your students a chance to introduce themselves to him or her. Point out that even if your students will be living elsewhere for the school year, they're likely to come home for breaks and summer vacation, so it's a good idea for them to find out more about your church's college ministry. Give your church's college leader time to explain the mission and programs of your church's college ministry and field questions.

If there's no college ministry and/or no college leader at your church, invite your senior pastor or another key adult leader to come and share their enthusiasm for involving youth group graduates even more fully into the life of your church.

Hopefully you've also worked out some sort of plan for the summer to help graduates transition from the youth ministry to church events and/or your church's college ministry. Now would be a good time to explain that plan to your students.

If you have time, distribute copies of the *Identity That Sticks* handout that students completed in session two. Give students a few minutes to edit and expand their descriptions of themselves at the bottom of the handout in regard to how they want to get connected to a church or para-church ministry in college. Invite a few volunteers to share any changes or additions they've made to their visions of themselves a year from now.

Close by asking your college ministry leader or pastor to pray for your students' Sticky Faith, that God will help them stay connected not only to God, but also to a vital Christian community that helps them live out their salvation.

More Worship and Prayer

- If you have time to incorporate more space for reflection, consider inviting students to connect their need for a church with the importance of intergenerational relationships. Introduce this exercise by saying: **Remember back in the second session when we talked about our identities and looked at a list of biblical names God has given us? The bigger truth about those names is that all of them are given not just to individuals but to the WHOLE people of God, the whole church. So when Scripture says we are beloved or chosen or holy, it applies to us individually but is also spoken to God-followers collectively, just like the Philippians passage we read earlier.**

As we noted, you're more likely to have Sticky Faith when you have relationships not just with people your own age but with adults who are older and even kids who are younger. So let's get more specific . . .

- At this point hand out pieces of paper and pens to students. Instruct them to divide the paper into four quadrants by drawing a line down the middle horizontally and another down the middle vertically. Then say: **Over the next few minutes I'd like you to brainstorm lists of people of different ages in the church who are part of your web of Sticky Faith relationships. Let's**

go through the quadrants and label them, then I'll give you time to make lists. Walk students through the following categories, then give them time to write down names on each list:

1. Older "senior" adults—like your grandparents' ages—who you are connected with in the church
2. Adults around your parents' ages or younger, probably including most of your youth leaders
3. Peers around your own age
4. Younger kids—middle school, elementary age, or younger who you are connected with in some way

■ After students have finished listing names, continue: Now look at your lists. Where are there more names? Where is there more blank space?

Let's take some time to pray silently through your lists. Pray for the people who are already on your lists, that they would continue to be part of your faith family as you grow into the next phase of being part of the church. Then pray that God would bring new people into your life to fill out the short lists, and if you're going away to college, that God would add to your lists from each age group to continue to help you work out your salvation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT A CHURCH OR COLLEGE GROUP

As you're visiting different churches or college groups, keep in mind the following questions. (You can probably think of additional questions that are important to you, and you can add those at the bottom of this list.)

There are no "right" answers to these questions. You might love large gatherings, or you might be drawn to smaller times of worship. You might want to meet on Sunday mornings, or you might want to attend Wednesday night gatherings. The key is to prayerfully and thoughtfully identify a church or college group that matches who you are and that can help you develop Sticky Faith.

What is the mission or vision of this group?

Where does this group meet? How am I going to get there?

When does this group meet? How does that fit my schedule?

How many people are involved?

Of those who are involved, how many are my gender and/or year in school and/or ethnicity? How much similarity or difference is important?

Who leads this group? How do I connect with the leader(s)?

What's the teaching like?

How about the worship?

Are there small groups or Bible studies that are part of this group?

What does this group do to reach out to people who don't know Jesus yet?

What does this group do to help those who are poor or marginalized?

How can I use my gifts and talents as part of this group?

How much does this group spend time together outside of gatherings?

Other questions that are important to you?