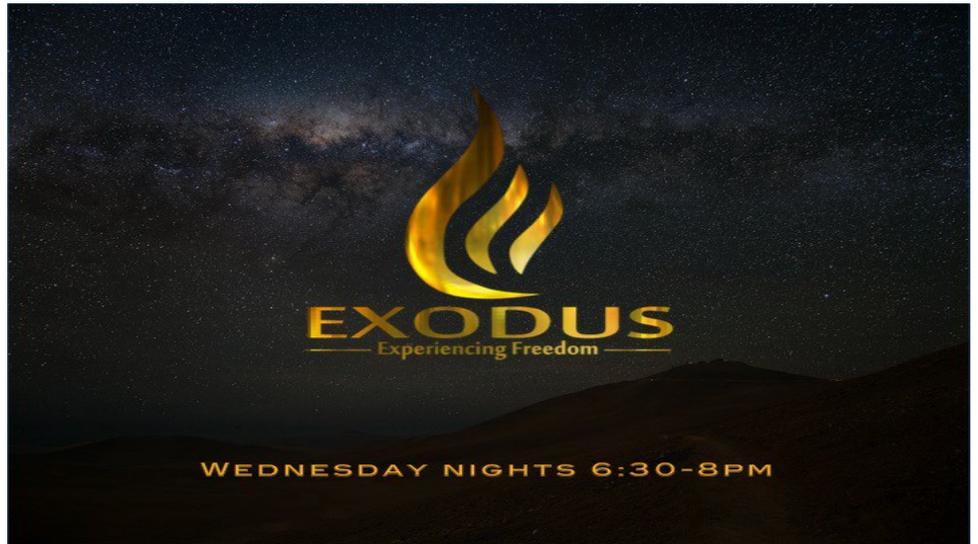




PARENT CONNECT

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH MINISTRY

JAN 2015



WORD OF THE YEAR

While many are busy 'resolving', some avoid those commitments like the plague. Nonetheless, everyone refocuses and retools at the start of the new year. One way your family can make a resolution...even if you aren't 'resolutions people'...is considering a word of the year.

As a family, decide to target a word that might influence decisions and priorities in your home.

Some ideas: *love, give, pray, forgive, togetherness, or laugh.*

Then make some creative reminders using the new family buzzword. Try wordle.com, a site that let's you create an art piece using words and phrases. Have the word emblazoned on some magnets and post them around your home, even your car. Or 'pinterest' the word and see what the masses are doing!

EXPERIENCING FREEDOM...

Happy 2015!

What an exciting year we have ahead as we continue on our journey as a church. As a youth ministry we are also starting the year on a journey - a journey through the book of Exodus, where we will be discovering how God leads his people to freedom.

Being a teenager has never been easy, but as we have reflected on during the Advent season, it is God's desire to be with us and to free his people from our bondage. In this study we will explore how we can find the freedom from fear, abandonment and rejection, feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness and bullying, counterfeit power, and freedom from that which ultimately enslaves us. These topics are everyday challenges for many of our young people but there is freedom and hope in Christ.

The study is timely with the recent release of the Hollywood movie *Gods and Kings*, but really it is a timeless encouragement for all of us as we see God's faithfulness to his promises and his desire for a people set apart to worship him and make him known.

We appreciate your prayers and support as we journey

together and encourage you as parents and caregivers to seek ways to have discussions about each of the weeks' topics. A workbook will be provided with a couple of short devotions to read during the week, so maybe you can talk through these together?

FPCC Youth meets on Wednesday nights from 6.30-8pm, and is open to all students in grades 6-12. The first week for 2015 will be January 7. As well as the study we enjoy a time of s games and a meal together.

It is a joy to serve the young people in the area and we look forward to the year ahead.

Peace and Joy from all the team at FPCC Youth.

By Chris Dodds



YOUTH CULTURE

A WORD FROM THE WORD

Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

Proverbs 22:6 (NLT)



SAYING NO

As a parent, it's difficult to say no to our children. We want them to have everything: great experiences, opportunities, and a full and complete life. It can feel like saying yes is the best way to accomplish that goal. But sometimes saying no is the best way to guide them. I'll use my lacrosse-laden family as an example. My son plays on a select team and was invited to play in three different tournaments this summer. After studying schedules, I realized the second tournament occurred while his mom and I were out of town. It also immediately followed another tournament. We discussed it and I offered reasons I didn't think it was a good idea. But I did not say no. Despite my objections, he wanted to participate in all three...and I relented.

The first day of practice for the second tournament, he called me and said he felt burnt out, tired and generally just needed a break. All the concerns I previously raised became reality. I supported his decision and had

him contact the coach. Sometimes, regardless of how proactive we are, we learn from experience and consequences.

Modeling 'no' to our children is vital! They need to see it and experience it to understand how to create balance and boundaries. Decisions will abound over the course of their lives. Some of those choices will require them to decline. As society offers more and more opportunities for our kids to engage in worthwhile, noble efforts – and as the world pushes for more and more excellence and 'resume building' prior to college – it becomes essential for us to teach our kids to examine all options from all angles and to establish priorities. Giving them permission to decline is not only OK, sometimes it's paramount.

By Darren Sutton

NEW RESOURCES

New books have recently been purchased to assist parents and care-givers in their role as disciple-makers. We pray these will be of encouragement and support. Titles include:

I Want to Talk with my Teens About Movies, Music & More
Parents' Guide to Understanding Social Media
Parents' Guide to Understanding Teen Brains
Parents' Guide to Sex and Dating

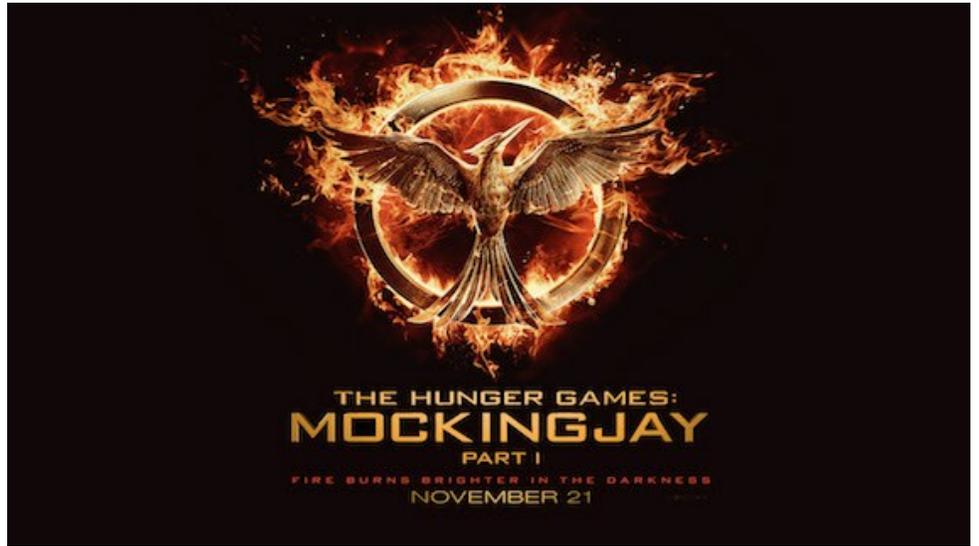
There are also new books for teenagers:

Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse
Junior High - My Friends

IN THEIR WORLD

MATTHEW 16:24-26

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”



THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY - PART 1

The blockbuster series, The Hunger Games, has rolled out the first installment of the finale with Mockingjay. Under the oppression of The Capitol, twelve districts have been forced to send tributes to a high tech Coliseum to dual to the death – the winning tribute bringing the favor of the Capitol to their district.

Katniss Everdeen has found herself an unsuspecting heroine and de facto leader of a rebellion against the merciless Capitol, and after two rounds of The Hunger Games, she is physically depleted and emotionally bankrupt. But as she realizes the importance of her mission and how it may benefit those she loves the most, she summons the fortitude to rage against the persecution of Panem, her country. She decides to risk her life in order to bring freedom to her captive friends and countrymen.

Read Matthew 16:24-26.

Clearly, the tributes are afforded luxuries no one else in Panem will ever see. But Katniss is wholly unimpressed and unmoved by this. How can a person stay grounded when material luxuries are at every turn? What makes it difficult to focus on the important things when materialism is everywhere?

After her rescue from the arena, Katniss is obviously worn mentally, physically, and emotionally. But true to character, when trying times demand her presence, she ‘shows up’, making the necessary sacrifices to lead and protect. How does her ‘mission’ inspire her sacrifice? Have you ever felt compelled to sacrifice for something or someone you loved? Have you ever been willing to give up everything for a cause or matter important to you? How were you called to sacrifice? In what ways are sacrifices rewarded? In what ways are they difficult? What is one sacrifice you have made – or have considered making - for your relationship with God?