

January
2008

Familia de Dios

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Advantages of Working with the Youth

Weekly Bible Studies Sunday:

Teach Bible class to teenagers at Sherman Ave. Then return to Upper West Manhattan Church to worship there. Drive to Washington, NJ to attend worship and teach teenage Bible class afterwards.

Monday:

Study parables with 4 Cruz brothers. Two of their friends have begun to attend!!

Tuesday:

Study with Anthony and Gardner. Then have Bible class with a Joel, or Melissa and Luz. Teach the teenage class at Sherman Ave.

Wednesday:

Study with Youming Chen. Study Corinthians with my father. Study parables with Luz Sanchez. Study Mark with Phillip Guillen.

Thursday:

Have Bible class with Madaleyne Olivarez. Singing at Sherman Ave.

Friday:

Study at my apartment with UWMCO members and invited guests.

Saturday:

Teach parables to young class in Fairlawn, NJ. Worship with congregation in Fairlawn.

As you may or may not know, a majority of my work revolves around young people. The abundance of young people interested in spiritual things is what led me to teaching full time. Naturally, you can imagine that this makes my evangelistic work interesting (to say the least).

There are many advantages of working with young people. First, I love kids. I get along with kids because they will typically like any one that is interested in them. Young people will look up to older peers very quickly. This is a very rewarding. It is also very easy to fellowship with young people. Sometimes I throw pizza parties. Other times we will play video games (such as "Rock Band") together. I regret to admit that I watched "Bratz" with Genesis. Don't rent that movie. It stinks. Hanging out with my students (friends) is one of the best parts of my work.

Another great thing about teaching young

people is they easily see you as an authority. I want to refrain from becoming "Mr. Bunting", but when needed, I can admonish and exhort my kids, and they will respect my words. Peers of the same age can easily disregard each other's criticism, but kids are humble enough to accept teaching from someone who is older. This makes it easy to hassle my kids about going to church every Sunday. I call one family Sunday mornings to make sure the boys are awake. Imagine doing the same for a Christian your age that has attendance problems. The best thing about working with young people is that they are still willing to learn. Bill went to camp this past summer. He had no real knowledge of the Bible. At the end of camp, he realized he didn't want to be a bad person anymore. He has a long way to go, but he was willing to learn that changing his life is the answer. This is a great thing. Read Mat 18:3-4. Jesus says it better than me.

The Bible Readers Club

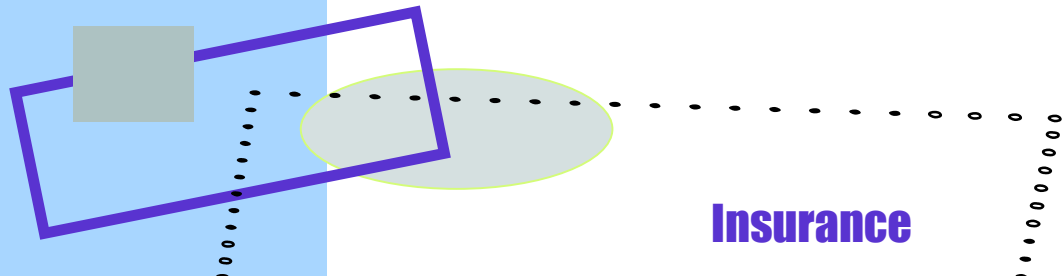
One of the most rewarding projects since I've started teaching is "The Bible Readers Club". When I first began teaching the kids classes at Sherman Ave., I realized that I would need to be more personally involved if I wanted to make the students feel more accountable. When I started getting support, I realized that this was the first area of improvement in my teaching methods.

I started teaching about being devoted to God Sunday mornings. I paired this with the task of reading 10 chapters of Luke a week. I also wanted them to write a several sentence summary of each chapter. I got email addresses, and made a list so I could email them each week. I soon realized that I set the bar a little high. No one read 10 chapters by the next Sunday.

I continued to write emails, and hoped

kids to read when I saw them in class. I would call Gary on the phone and read Luke with him occasionally. After a while, several students finished. Madaleyne (18 yrs) finished first, followed by Anthony (13), Gary (12), and Carlos (17).

Now I have assigned Mark. I made a spreadsheet to keep track of everyone's reading. Anthony finished in one week, followed by me, then Gary, and Jonathon. That was all under 2.5 weeks. 9 other students have read portions and are on the way to finishing. I did throw in some incentive. I bought 3 full-length picture Bibles, and promised a bag of cookies to everyone who finished. To make sure I read Mark, I promised \$5 to any student that finished before me. Anthony beat me, and I paid up. I told Anthony that he shouldn't read just for money. He said, "I didn't read for the money or the cookies. I did it for the competition." I guess that's a start.



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Young Christian of the Month!!!!



January's young Christian of the month goes to Jonathon Ortiz. Jonathon is 11 and goes to the Spanish Fairlawn Church of Christ in NJ. I met Jonathon at NJ camp. He was one of the campers in my bunk. He was fun and silly, but was a good influence on the other boys in the cabin. Jonathon is one of my first students to finish all of Mark. Even though I do not see him as often (he attends a different church) he was still very active and read Mark in less than 2 weeks. He is very enthusiastic in class, but always maintains great behavior. He is always excited to say the answers when we review previous classes. He also asks great questions during class. Jonathon is a good

Well there is going to be some changes in my health insurance. I was working at Starbucks 20 hours a week to maintain my health care benefits. This was an inexpensive and good solution. I was originally planning to teach part-time, and work at Starbucks for the rest of the time. As time progressed, more teaching opportunities arose, and Sbus became more of a hindrance than an aid. I got behind my required hours during this past quarter, making me ineligible to receive healthcare this quarter. I continued to work the remainder of the fall to keep the plan.

I found an insurance provider that will give me health care at a group rate. Since I do not have a full year of tax

documentation, I had to prove my employment as an independent contractor. Men from several of the churches that support me took time out to write letters to prove my employment. I recently found out that I am now eligible for this health care plan. I should be signed up for the new plan starting this February. I am still unsure whether I will need more support or not.

I want to continue working about 10 hours at Sbus to keep contact with the "outside world". Plus, the nature of the work is a good balance to my studying work. My studies seem to be more organized when I have a little extra structure. It feels good to have a simple job to get me out of the apartment. I am not sure if I will always work at Sbus, but I plan to always keep about 10 hours of a side job.



Through the Grapevine

John 15:5 tells us that Jesus is the vine. Sometimes Jesus' teaching greatly resembles a vine when one Christian affects someone, who goes to someone else, who in turn talks to someone else. This cycle can go on indefinitely. The Upper West Manhattan church has had some great proof of this.

Neil Grupp came to New York for work. Soon after he became a Christian. He brought one of his co-workers, Leah Ann, to church. She also became a Christian. Leah Ann's mother was excited about Leah's new spirituality, but still unsure about the church (she had never met the church). Leah Ann's mother, whose name is Leah Ray (it gets confusing), visited Leah Ann a couple months ago. She had a great impression of the church and was very impressed with her daughter's growth.

Both Leah's and I had some time to study together, and I had opportunity for some very beneficial conversations with Leah Ray during the remainder of her stay. Leah Ray left very encouraged and determined to find a good church worshipping in spirit and truth.

We found a church in Leah Ray's hometown. She has been attending ever since. Coincidentally, the Powers, a family that Leah Ann knew from high school, attends that church. Mr. Powers and Leah Ray have had several studies together. Leah Ray learned more about baptism, and concluded that she was baptized too young, and for the wrong reasons. Leah Ray was baptized this January.

Leah Ann had me prepare classes for her mom, aunt and grandma to study together. Now that Leah Ray is baptized, there is one more strong influence for teaching the rest of her family.