

THE ENCOURAGER

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TEEN TRUTH INOVATION

Our Sunday School seemed to be losing girls around the age of 12, and at that time, there was nothing extra just for them. The older class dealt with topics that were way above what they knew of the bible and Sunday school and in the minds of the students had also stopped being "cool".

We wanted something that would reach out to those kids and keep them involved learning the gospel.

So we started Teen Truth, which was for girls 12 and up. We started this in the fall of 2004 and it ran until the spring of 2008. (There was a



similar group started around the same time for boys as well). We usually met every second Friday from 7 to around 9. Each time we would have a group of two or three leaders "in charge". They would plan some sort of activity, bring food, and prepare a message. We would have anywhere from 3 girls to 25 girls at a time. At first we met in a day care with a gym, but then we switched and started meeting in homes or at the park on nice days.

Teen truth timeline:

We started at 7:00 or a little after depending on if anyone was late. We started off with an activity of some sort. We tried sports and when we saw the girls weren't too interested in that specifically—we did variations, for example, different relay races that were fun. We played games similar to "blind man's bluff". We did game nights where we would bring out several games and split up. We also did a couple car rally's.

We generally did the activity till just after 8:00 (depending on who was doing the message and how long it was going to be). In the beginning we did the message next than had a light snack before leaving, we changed this later on to having the snack then ending with a message. We changed this because we found ending with snack the girls got more hyper and silly and then left on this note. When we did the message last the girls left with the message more fresh on their minds and didn't get quite silly.

Then around 8:30 the message would be given, sometimes a short 10 minute message and other times a more in depth longer 20 minute message (again, depending on who was speaking and what the topic was, and how well the girls were listening).

Whatever leftover time we had, we would hand out song books (one of the leaders did a compilation of different songs that she felt the girls would enjoy) and we sang. That was the end of the evening. Then the drivers would drive their group home. Each of us who had access to a vehicle would be assigned to a group of girls to call and remind about Teen Truth get–togethers and then pick them up and drop them off. One night, when phoning a couple girls, one of them told me she was grounded. When I got to their house her mom told me that she wasn't allowed out anywhere except to teen truth so it is clear that Teen Truth had a positive effect with the parents. (continued on Page 2)

The ENCOURAGER Page 2

THE ROLLER COASTER STANDARD

Messages:

The messages were wide—ranging. Some were based on stories from the bible and included issues they deal with in their life and at school. We did skits from time to time to illustrate points. We also got them involved at times by splitting them into groups and discussing a passage and then sometimes getting them to relay it to the rest of the group by way of a skit or just explanation.

An example of a lesson.

One that the girls remember and talk about is actually a lesson that I did. There is a picture of it on the Teen Truth group on Facebook.....of me dressed as a clown. To set up my lesson, the leaders set up a banner for a roller coaster ride. When I started the message I began dressed up as a clown calling the audience to come up for a ride on my rollercoaster. The only catch was they had be a certain height, If they were taller than the marker, they could go on the ride. I called on several girls to come up and see if they met the standard, and of course none of them did. I then related it to us. God has a standard for us to enter into heaven. If we meet His standard we will go to heaven when we die. I talked about how people think they can get to heaven by their own standards...then I related it to the roller coaster again and how some people maybe tried to jump or climb up, but it didn't matter because that would not change their height. I then talked about God's standard being perfection and how we are all sinners and CANNOT meet His standard on our own. So He made a way, through Jesus Christ, for us.

On-going:

We are still in touch with some of the girls and a few come to the occasional youth group outings organized as a way to try to keep in touch with the girls and the boys as well. A few of the girls and boys will also attend gospel meeting every once in a while.

We did see changes in a couple girls, one in particular who professed and was reading her bible daily and studying and coming out to meetings and seeming to change. But now we don't see her and she seems lost to us now. We still see the positive input we have on most of the girls. A few of them come to Sunday school who are in their mid to late teens. A couple of them come to gospel meetings. Some of them will call up leaders just to chat once in a while. And when we run into any of them they almost always are pleased to see us



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and chat. There are few who won't perhaps come into meeting but will wait outside on some days to see us and talk for a bit. This gives me hope that the messages we gave and the friendships we shared have affected them and they still think about what they heard. God can use that, even years down the road.

Written by: Carla Wood— West End Gospel Hall, Winnipeg, MB "We...
got them
involved!"

