In the fall of 2016, our Sr. High youth group will be making some significant adjustments to our schedule and programing. These changes are intended to enhance and improve the goals and values we have of helping students discover and grow to maturity and mission in Christ, and provide a safe place where students can feel welcomed, have fun, build relationships and be encouraged in their faith Journey (Heb. 10:24-25).

Presently we have one gathering on Wednesday nights from 6:30PM – 8:00 PM. At this gathering we attempt to have times of worship, engaging teaching from God’s word, small group connections, and – if time allows – some fun games and hangout time. That is the “catch” that we continue to run into: “If time allows.” It’s difficult to try to pull off all of the aspects we’d like to see take place on a typical Wednesday night which causes us to be pretty limited on the effectiveness of some aspects of this ministry. Usually something has to be sacrificed and quite honestly, we feel that these components are too important to continually sacrifice. In light of that, this coming fall, we will shifting the focus of our Wednesday night gathering to be more small group oriented with what will be calling “Lifegroups.” We will also be debuting a brand new large group event called “THE WELL.” This change in schedule will allow us to do “more things” and to “do them well.” The schedule breakdown will look something like this:

**Sunday nights: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM “The WELL”**

**Wednesday nights: 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM “Life groups”**

**So what will these “new gatherings” look like exactly?** In a nutshell, we’re basically taking the “large group aspects” of our youth ministry and moving them to Sunday nights, while keeping the “Small group” aspects of our youth group on Wednesday nights.

*What is “The Well:”* The Well gets its name for two reasons.

**1)** God specifically speaks of himself as a fountain of living water and offers us access to that life in the finished work of Jesus Christ (John 4). So often we look to other things or “broken cisterns” (Jer. 2:13) to satisfy us when our only true hope of satisfaction for our souls is found in Jesus Christ! Only in him will we never thirst again (John 4:14).

**2)** The well was (and still is in many parts of the world) a place where people gathered to receive the life giving resource of water. It was a place where, in the morning, or evening, the people would gather to fill their needs and socialize.

We desire this new Sunday evening gathering to be a place where students can come “thirsty for God” and engage in worship and hearing God’s word! We also desire to create a place where students can come and hang out together… and with our expanded time frame, we’ll be able to provide snacks, and even organized games to foster community.

***But 2 and ½ hours seems like a lot, is that necessary???***  Here’san idea of what that time will look like.

**6:30 – 7:00** 🡪 Hangout time

**7:00 – 8:00** 🡪 Youth Service (worship, teaching, testimonies, etc.)

**8:00 – 9:00** 🡪 Open hangout time and/or organized games, with snacks available as well.

The actual “service time” will only be an hour so students will be welcome to just attend that if they’d prefer. However, adding the extra hour on the back end will allow us to add in more creative games (since we will now have access to our gym – and have the time to do it!) and provide additional relational time with students and leaders to hang out together while enjoying snacks! Students ALWAYS want to hang out after youth group… now we’re planning for that!

*What about life groups? What are those?* Every Wednesday night, small groups of high school students and adult leaders will gather together from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. These groups become safe environments where students can openly discuss the issues they are facing with other teens of the same gender. Our goal for these small groups is to create a place where relationships can be established and deepened, but also where God’s truth can be proclaimed. A life group is a place where everyone knows your name and where you can truly be honest about your relationship with God and receive help and encouragement from peers and adults! The exciting prospect of having an entire night dedicated to life groups is that we take one of the most “time-dependent” aspects of our ministry – relationship building/discipleship – and give them just what they need! Also, with the expanded time, we’ll try to build community in a variety of ways from studying the word, doing activities together, engaging in fun competitions with other groups (scavenger hunt, etc.) and prayer time!