

Escape Your Christmas COMFORT ZONE



As we pulled up outside the house in the less-than-desirable neighborhood, Whitney's nervousness was palpable. Her sister Natalie was no more certain what to do. Michael tried to show his bravado, but it was clear he also was unsure. "Come on," I said, "let's get the stuff." We lugged several bags from the back of my 4-wheel drive and started up the path. The students jockeyed for position behind me, making certain I stood between them and the doorway ahead of us. We rang the bell and waited.

A few moments passed, and the nervous smiles on the faces of my students began to waiver. Suddenly, the door opened,

and before us stood a middle-aged woman. Thin, unkempt, and clearly confused, she looked with more than a little skepticism at the band of gift bearers on her doorstep. "Merry Christmas," I proclaim, with slightly more boldness than I felt. "We're here to deliver a Christmas basket from Victory Mission."

For students who never worried about where their next meal came from, it was an eye-opening experience.

The kids awkwardly handed each of their treasures over with an embarrassed "Merry Christmas." The woman was shocked, not by the gift, but by those who brought it. When all the pieces had been delivered, the students offered a shy "God bless you," and trudged back to the car.

This was the first of six stops for these middle-school students, and at each of the following, they became a little bolder. By the end of the day, they

were rushing to the door themselves and eagerly engaging in conversation with every family. For students who never worried about where their next meal came from, it was an eye-opening experience.

Christian education is about more than Bible facts and

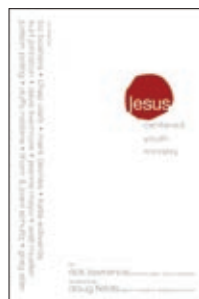
TEACHER'S TOOLBOX



Best of Try This One

Minister to teens with ideas that work. How do you know they will? Because the ideas—hundreds of them—come from people like you: people in the thick of youth ministry. The activities and games have been tried and tweaked so you can slide them into your program without risk and without tons of preparation. Includes practical ideas for Bible studies, crowd breakers, discussion starters, group builders, games, fund raisers, and outreach programs. **BONUS!** Tips from youth workers about all sorts of stuff!

Paper. 120 pages. 03LK0611 \$15.99



Jesus-Centered Youth Ministry

You started out with a commitment to making Christ the absolute center of your youth ministry. Now discover how to keep Him there, continually drawing teens to Jesus. Learn how to make every activity, Bible study, missions trip, and deep discussion point kids toward the cross, encouraging them to grow in relationship with Jesus. Leaders such as Bo Boshers, Mark Devries, Kurt Johnson, and others contribute their advice and perspectives on discipleship, mentoring, evangelism, small groups, outreach, counseling, volunteers, and much more.


Paper. 168 pages. 03LK0612 \$17.99

memory verses. It's even more than spiritual formation and interactive discussion. It's about learning to help people. It's about stepping beyond the comfortable and into the challenging situations that allow us to learn to be like Jesus.

Make your time with students as valuable as possible. Along with lessons, discussions, games, and activities, find a way to put them in a place of ministry. The more real-world experience your students get, the

better equipped they will be for the road ahead. We know that everyone doesn't look like us, and everyone certainly doesn't live like us. Do your students know that? Have they grown up in a bubble? Or have they grown up in difficult circumstances? In either case, learning to invest in others teaches students about gratefulness, blessing, and sharing joy.

This holiday season look for ways to involve your students in some kind of outreach or benevolence ministry.

Deliver Christmas baskets. Get involved in a food, clothing, or toy drive. Do something that will make a lasting impression on the world, and especially on your students. 

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