

克利夫蘭華人教會

Cleveland Chinese Christian Church

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Youth Pastor Letter

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Dear Church Family,

Whether you are a parent, a youth leader, or someone that just happens to talk with students from time to time, you will at some be asked a question about Christianity that might seem hard to answer. What should you do?

Answering students' questions about the Bible, God, life, and Christianity is like walking a tight rope. On one hand, students deserve thoughtful and simple but not simplistic answers. On the other hand, the questions often reveal deeper, unspoken, concerns present in their own heart. The challenge is to provide answers for the spoken questions while also recognizing and addressing the unspoken questions.

Many of the questions we hear in youth ministry have roots in these three more fundamental questions:

1. Is God good?
2. Am I loved?
3. Am I alone?

We want to have the right answer, but sometimes we don't and then we can get so caught up in answering the question that we miss the person in front of us. When asked a difficult question from your child or a student you work with, it's a good idea to take a moment and consider what might be fueling their inquiry.

Our need to "have the right answer" can often be far more about feeling a need to secure our own faith in our own knowledge than considering what it means to love the person in front of us by considering their question on a heart-level as well as the initial head-level. We need to look at the student and not only consider their question but also consider why they are asking it.

It isn't likely that their question simply comes from a place of detached hypothetical curiosity, though it is possible. It is more probable, however, that their questions come from a place of struggle, doubt, or fear, in their lives. Take a moment to consider where this question is coming from. What does this question say about their hopes, fears, doubts and all? With that consideration you will better know how to answer their question.

If you don't know the answer to a student's question, seek out the answer. Let them know that you, like them, struggle at times and don't have all of the information. Consider together trying to find the answer and then lovingly address what is behind their question.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or prayer requests, please contact me at jmlilley@clevelandccc.org.

In Christ,
Pastor Jonathan Lilley