



## Hallmarks of Proclaiming the Gospel in Young Life

We have had the honor, privilege and high calling of making Jesus and His Gospel of love and life known to kids for more than 70 years in Young Life. The following characterizes Young Life talks.

### 1. We pray - we pray a lot - before, during, and after, knowing that:

- When hearts turn to Christ it is the Father's doing (John 6:44, 65).
- It is the Holy Spirit who brings any power (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).
- It is the Holy Spirit who convicts hearts ... we only "set the table" for Him to move (John 16:8-11).

### 2. We proclaim the Person of Jesus in every message (John 3:14-15).

*"We affirm that Young Life is, and always has been, a Christ-centered mission. As our founder, Jim Rayburn, said, 'Jesus is not just what Young Life is all about. Jesus is all that Young Life is about.' We talk about Jesus knowing that most kids do not have a clear picture of His character, His personality, His power, His love. A great distinctive in Young Life is how we share the Gospel narratives with our young friends. We help them see this amazing person who cares so much about them. Jesus comes alive for them as we present Him in Gospel accounts." - From Young Life's Proclamation Paper*

He is the starting point (Creator and Incarnation), middle point (our Redeemer) taking on our sin on the cross, and ending point (He's the object of our faith – the One in whom we entrust our lives) of our Gospel.

*"If kids knew how wonderful the Savior is, they'd fall in love with Him." - George Sheffer, Young Life staff from the 1950s-1970s.*

- Jesus reveals/explains God's heart – who God is (John 1:1-4, 14, 18).
- Jesus shows us life to the full (John 10:10).
- Jesus enters into our lives, knowing and bearing its pain and chaos (Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16).
- Jesus is who we invite into our hearts and who we live "with" the rest of our days and for eternity (Colossians 1:27).

*"First, we must stick to presenting Jesus Christ. There are all kinds of secondary things we could get involved in, but they aren't Young Life's business. We are not to 'major in minors,' but in the one all-important essential: that Jesus Christ is our greatest need, and that He's all we need." - Jim Rayburn, quoted from Young Life's Proclamation Paper.*

### 3. We always open and read the Bible.

- We know God's Word carries more weight than our human words (Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11).
- We demonstrate that the Gospel is based on, and springs from, the Scripture.



- 4. We bring the Scripture to life, particularly Jesus' miracles and words.**
  - This takes a lot of time for us, abiding in the Scripture and preparing.
  - We have fun with this.
  - Kids are then able to enter into a Jesus event, to live it/feel it as if they were there.
  
- 5. We rely on storytelling.**
  - We are rabbi-like in this way.
  - We are like Jesus, using a parable/illustration
  - (Mark 4:34) to bring alive whatever point we are trying to communicate.
  
- 6. We weave in our own testimony - our experience of Jesus and of life - into each talk.**
  - We connect with our talk; the talk is not outside of us.
  
- 7. We love humor.**
  - Laughter disarms resistance, is fun, and opens hearts to listen.
  - Our humor is never "put downs" or "off color" or "bathroom-like."
  
- 8. We uphold a profound respect for a kid's choice and what is believed.**
  - There is no "finger-pointing": We say "we" and "us," not "you."
  - There is no pressure or cornering with an argument.
  - We do not assume anything about kids, in terms of their understanding. We don't use religious jargon, but our perspective is that kids owe it to themselves to consider the Gospel.
  - We respect God's work and His timing with a person. God is involved with kids long before we come to know them, and long after we have no more contact with them.
  
- 9. We invite kids into a relationship/friendship with Jesus Christ**