

ABSTRACT

A CONTEMPLATIVE YOUTH MINISTRY RETREAT MODEL

by

Russell H. Freeman

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry retreat model in the lives of youth through a weeklong camping experience. This study sought to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth by teaching six selected classic spiritual disciplines. This study developed a model by which the disciplines are taught as well as a measure to gauge the continued practice of these disciplines after the summer camp experience.

The study showed the significance of the contemplative youth ministry curriculum, as a means to spiritual growth, in the number of youth who continued the practice of the disciplines eight weeks after the conclusion of camp.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

No longer can youth workers offer pizza and ski trips and hope youth will grow deeper as followers of Jesus Christ. Gone are the days where entertainment youth ministry with its flashy and flamboyant approach is acceptable:

Youth ministry is undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift. This shift calls us back to our roots in the first-century missionary movement, when the first instance of youth ministry went on record. Without so much as a ski trip or a slice of pizza, a young man named Timothy [who in all likelihood was a teenager] became the protégé of a missionary name Paul. (Dean and Foster 25)

Activity-driven ministry fails to meet the spiritual needs of today's youth.

Today's young people are seeking more than a Madison Avenue approach to ministry. Many are seeking stability, substance, and significant spiritual growth, although some view Christianity as a "passing fancy" and just "one of many dimensions that they blend into a potpourri of perspectives, experiences, skills, and contexts toward arriving at their worldview and lifestyle" (Barna, "Teenagers").

This study sought to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth through teaching the contemplative youth ministry model (CYMM) in a camp setting. It focused upon developing and evaluating a contemplative youth ministry curriculum model aimed at creating a spiritual awareness of Christ, also understood as deepening discipleship, and a practice of six classic Christian spiritual disciplines among youth in a retreat setting.

Understanding the Problem

The youth of today are at risk. They are prey to just about any type of influence from music to movies, from the Internet to entertainment. Rarely can youth watch television, listen to an iPod, or read magazines without being “deluged with lies about life” (Dunn 20). The culture floods young people with messages about who they are and who God is. Youth identity requires a stabilizing factor through which a depth of discipleship can be achieved. Not only do teenagers want to be challenged spiritually, according to George Barna, but two out of three desire a personal relationship with God (Simpson 6). Youth are open to being shaped and need guidance and direction for spiritual development.

Involving youth in the classic Christian spiritual disciplines is a means by which depth of discipleship, faith formation, identity with Christ, and spiritual maturity occurs. Implementing these disciplines in a retreat setting provides a controlled environment through which youth can develop habits that lead to growth. In other words, the spiritual disciplines enable the adolescent to establish habits through which Christ becomes the transforming center of identity and formation. Youth as a whole can develop positive defenses to negative cultural influences through the practice of six spiritual disciplines in a retreat setting.

This study suggests that youth who experience a contemplative youth ministry model have an increased awareness of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines as well as an increased sense of overall spiritual well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry retreat model in the lives of youth through a weeklong camping experience. The evaluation involved a survey to measure the increased awareness and practice of the six spiritual disciplines by teens after attending a weeklong camp in which these disciplines were taught. The disciplines used were worship, prayer, study, service, celebration, and fasting to determine the impact of the spiritual formation retreat model upon youth, the instruments used provided data to answer the following basic questions.

Research Question #1

What is the spiritual well-being of youth at the beginning of camp, and to what extent are youth presently engaged in the six Christian spiritual disciplines?

Research Question #2

What is the level of spiritual well-being among youth at the end of camp upon completion of the contemplative youth ministry model?

Research Question #3

To what extent are youth involved in the practice of the six Christian spiritual disciplines eight weeks after leaving camp?

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following principal terms should be defined.

Contemplative Youth Ministry

Contemplative youth ministry model for the purpose of this study is a form of ministry with youth emphasizing the practice of spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation in order to develop attentiveness to God. Mark Yaconelli, Director of the *Youth*

Ministry and Spirituality Project at San Francisco Theological Seminary and founder of the Sabbath contemplative retreats, coined the phrase “Contemplative Youth Ministry” in 1995 during a seminar at a National Youth Worker’s Convention in San Francisco.

Yaconelli writes, “By contemplative, I mean practices that invite a deeper awareness of God’s presence” (“Ancient-Future Youth Ministry”). According to a personal e-mail I received, Yaconelli has found practicing the spiritual disciplines “very useful in [my] youth ministry” (“Contemplative Youth Ministry Question”).

Yaconelli’s workshop involved teaching Taizé (a contemplative form of private and public worship), *lectio divina*, spiritual direction, and the spiritual disciplines to youth workers, yet even at that time, many were reluctant to embrace these practices and those who did were viewed with suspicion (“Spirituality”). Yaconelli has recently published Contemplative Youth Ministry, which offers additional methods, theories, and rationale for teaching youth the classic spiritual disciplines. He offers contemplative youth ministry as an invitation to “slow down and receive the young people in our lives” (24). Yaconelli suggests youth need people who know how to be attentive to God and to others. Contemplative youth ministry “isn’t just another ministry model; its an opening of the heart, an attentiveness to God, a receptivity to the Holy spirit, a growing relationship with Jesus and his way of compassion” (25).

Contemplative youth ministry results from an acknowledgement that “many of our current forms of youth ministry are destructive” (Yaconelli, “Contemplative Youth Ministry Question”). According to Yaconelli, most current youth ministries are based around entertainment or a charismatic leader or are information driven (providing youth with religious instruction or education). Contemplative youth ministry is “about refusing

to be so busy that you overlook God in youth ministry” (Yaconelli, Contemplative Youth Ministry 25). It is about “trusting unashamedly that God desires our presence more than our activity” (26).

The word “contemplative” comes from the Latin word *contemplari*, meaning “to survey” (McKim 60). The contemplative life involves a person “devoted to prayer and to spiritual disciplines” (60). The Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary defines “Contemplative” as, “relating to a religious order devoted to prayer and penance.” The definition for “contemplation” is “[the] concentration on spiritual things as a form of private devotion” or “a state of mystical awareness of God’s being.” A final definition is “an act of considering with attention.”

The contemplative life is sometimes contrasted to the “active” life. History suggests medieval monks and nuns in monasteries were considered contemplative, and they perceived the contemplative life as primarily mystical. An important aspect of contemplation has “always been study and meditation of the spiritual meaning of the Bible with the intention of growing in our likeness to God through greater knowledge of God” (Allen 13). Nevertheless, a new understanding of contemplation was conceived for work with youth combining inner solitude with active expression. For the purpose of this study, I call it “active contemplation.”

Contemplative youth ministry might best be understood as a spiritual formation ministry through which attention is given to the practice of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines. Because the study worked with young persons, contemplative youth ministry should not be thought of in terms of being boring, dull, or overly quiet. The practice of active contemplation combines both the creative elements of working with youth as well

as the benefits of the spiritual formation practices and disciplines. In Way To Live, student Marie Hess, age 16, writes, “Creativity began with God and is central to the nature of God” (Bass and Richter 95). Creativity is essential in teaching the spiritual disciplines to students.

Although some think of a contemplative as one who lives in silence or solitude at a monastery, as one who is “receptive rather than active,” contemplative youth ministry is building upon the original understanding of *contemplari*, “to survey” (Allen 11). It is being reshaped for a postmodern youth culture that questions everything, rearranges priorities, finds new ethics, and values experience above tradition (Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry 214).

The contemplative youth ministry model takes youth deeper into Christian discipleship. It helps fill the hunger of souls desiring to go deeper in a relationship with Jesus Christ. It de-emphasizes activities based solely on entertaining youth and emphasizes the intentional spiritual development of disciples. Contemplative youth ministry heightens relationship building as well as spiritual practices that lead to an increased attentiveness to God. It is grounded in the spiritual formation context while birthing new methods of adapting to the twenty-first century youth culture (Yaconelli, “Youth Ministry”).

Christian Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is the “evolving growth of one’s Christian spiritual life in conformity with Jesus Christ. It is marked in various ways, including the sense of one’s obedience to Christ and union with him” (McKim 267).

Spiritual formation is the intentional development of the soul both in a private and community context for the purpose of giving greater attentiveness to God. The emphasis of this study is upon Christian spiritual formation among youth in a retreat setting. In addition, the purpose of Christian spiritual formation is to grow deeper into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Richard Foster and Emilie Griffin define spiritual formation as a “pattern, a series of concrete actions that will gently move us toward transformation in Christ” (xiii). The purpose is not the act or even the spiritual practices that move to the point of enlightenment. The “transformation in us is God’s work. It is a work of grace” (xiii). Spiritual formation means “growing in grace, becoming more like Jesus, learning to live a holy life, increasing our love for God and service to others, or practicing the Christian virtues” (Senior and Weber 24).

In summary, spiritual formation can be understood differently in many traditions and contexts; however, for purpose of this study, spiritual formation is the intentional development of the soul both in a private and community context for the goal of giving greater attentiveness to God. One means of achieving this intentional development is the practice of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines.

Classic Christian Spiritual Disciplines

The *classic Christian spiritual disciplines*, or habits, as used in the curriculum, are defined as “religious practices that are expressions of devotion to God” (McKim 78). In Christianity, a number of individual and corporate disciplines are carried out; however, for the purpose of this study, six spiritual disciplines, as defined in chapter 2, were chosen: worship, prayer, study, service, celebration, and fasting.

Spiritual disciplines are a means by which followers of Jesus Christ live out their faith, develop maturity, and give greater attentiveness of God. “The classical Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond the surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm” (Foster 1). Richard Foster suggests these disciplines are best lived out in everyday life.

Although the disciplines in themselves contain no transforming power, the power comes from God who, by his grace, touches the soul of the follower seeking spiritual growth and renewal. These practices “have been proven over the centuries to foster a deeper relationship with the Creator of the Universe” (Jones, Soul Shaper 26-27). These disciplines, when faithfully practiced, enable the Christian to experience “God’s love while fulfilling [her or his] desire for spiritual exploration” (27).

Youth

The targets of this study were adolescents between the age of 14 and 18. Youth ministry has evolved much over the years and has remained a priority for many churches. The Bible is filled with youth who are both called by God and grow in grace. Tradition says Mary the mother of Jesus was a teenager when she was called by God to bear the Savior in her womb. K. Knight suggests Mary gave birth to Jesus when she was about thirteen or fourteen years old according to the age at which Jewish maidens became marriageable. Nevertheless, this suggestion is speculation because no historical documentation tells Mary’s exact age.

Jesus was twelve years old when the Gospel writers report him sitting at the feet of the teachers in the Temple (Luke 2:41-50). The Old Testament gives accounts of God calling such youths as David (1 Sam. 16:13) and Saul (1 Sam. 10:1)—Kings of Israel;

and Samuel (1 Sam. 2:18-3:21)—Prophet over Israel. Scriptural evidence suggests God’s interest in developing leadership among youth.

“Youth ministry has morphed from a fringe occupation to a ‘must-have’ for any church that wants to influence its community” (Jones, Soul Shaper 13). The youth culture is constantly changing, yet the need for Christ to transform youth remains the same.

Young people are current as well as future church leaders, predecessors, and those about whom this study is written.

Project

The project took place with junior and senior high youth at the existing Southwest Texas Conference (SWTC) of the United Methodist Church summer camps in July 2006. Since 2000, the youth ministry of the SWTC has focused upon “reaching youth for Christ.” The evangelical and spiritual nature of the camps has resulted in an evolution of receptivity among youth towards contemplative youth ministry model.

The contemplative youth ministry model was used for both the junior high “JAM” camp on 2-6 July as well as the senior high “Quest” camp on 23-27 July 2006. Slight modifications in approach and applications were made for the different age groups. The camps took place at the Mount Wesley Retreat and Conference Center, a ministry of the Southwest Texas Conference located in Kerrville, Texas, as well as the H. E. Butt Foundation Camp, near Leakey, Texas. The contemplative youth ministry retreat model was conducted with a total of 204 youth. Numerous adult and junior counselor volunteer staff, as well as a core team of adult lay and clergy leaders, were required to help lead small groups and implement the CYMM. A paid camp speaker and worship band

previewed the CYMM and were integral in helping carry out the planned worship sessions.

Although the youth participants came from dozens of churches throughout the Southwest Texas Conference, the ethnic diversity was slight. Almost 95 percent of the youth attending summer camp were Anglo, with 3 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent African-American.

Context

The Southwest Texas Conference summer camps have an eighty-year tradition at Mount Wesley. Theologically, the camps have become very evangelistic and conservative in nature over the past seven years. Before this time youth enjoyed camp, but the emphasis was upon having fun and making friends rather than developing a relationship with Jesus Christ. When the initial switch in theology was made, several pastors and laypeople alike were unhappy with the obvious evangelistic bent of the camps. Over time, and due to the success and growth in the summer camping program, those who have disagreed with the new direction of the camp have lessened their complaints. The summer camps have become a place where youth are given an opportunity to respond to a first-time commitment to Jesus Christ, make a recommitment of their faith, and answer a call to full-time ministry. The purpose of integrating the CYMM into this existing program is not only to continue reaching out through evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development but also to encourage young leaders to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ through adopting the spiritual disciplines.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry camp model in the lives of youth through a weeklong camping experience. A curriculum was developed by which youth were taught and practiced six classic Christian spiritual disciplines in a retreat setting.

The gauge of measurement evaluated the spiritual well-being of youth at the beginning, immediately upon completion of, and eight weeks after camp. The question by which measurement was accessed is, “Did the contemplative youth ministry model increase the level of spiritual well-being of youth and deepen their understanding as well as practice of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines?”

Variables

The variables are the six spiritual disciplines taught at camp through the contemplative youth ministry model. The variable measured was the overall sense of spiritual-well being by the individual youth before and after the camping experience. A second variable measured was the continued practice of the six spiritual disciplines after camp.

Instrumentation

The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) scale and the Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS) helped measure the spiritual well-being of students and the effectiveness and awareness of the spiritual disciplines in the lives of the participants.

Youth took the SWB a total of three times. They completed the SWB scale at the beginning (pre-), the conclusion (post-), and at eight weeks after (follow-up) camp ended. In addition, participants completed the SAS, a researcher-designed questionnaire,

measuring previous knowledge and continued practice of the spiritual disciplines.

Participants completed the SAS a total of two times. They completed the SAS at the end of camp (post-) and then received by mail a second copy (follow-up) eight weeks after camp. The goal was for each student to complete a total of five surveys. Only forty of the 204 participants completed all five of the surveys.

The experiment took place at the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church senior high summer youth camp and involved 204 youth, ages 14 to 18.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to a single camp environment of the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. The project was also limited by the relatively small number of youth participating from the SWTC. Although the number of subjects was limited, these findings may have direct impact upon the churches and local church youth ministry in the SWTC. Application may be encouraged among other United Methodist conferences as well as youth ministry as a whole. The study sought to provide a contemplative youth ministry camp curriculum model, which may be used in other camp or retreat settings.

This study involved instructing youth in creative ways to learn and practice the spiritual disciplines in order to increase their attentiveness to God and overall spiritual well-being. The implementation of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines served as a tool to deepen spiritual growth. This study encouraged youth leaders to implement contemplative youth ministry into their local church ministry based on the development of a retreat model.

Theological Foundation

The theology emphasized in this study includes both a theology of spirituality and a theology of grace.

A Theology of Spirituality

Spiritual theology is the field that studies spirituality (Allen 18). It involves a way of viewing theology from the perspective of spiritual formation, the spiritual disciplines, and their practices and use. It includes living the Christian life through personal devotion and within the faith community (McKim 268). In Roman Catholic circles, spiritual theology also has involved foundational, mystical, moral, and ascetical theology. Eugene Peterson defines spiritual theology:

[Spiritual theology is] the attention that we give to the details of living life to the glory of God and the Jesus-revealed Way. It is a protest against theology depersonalized into information about God; it is a protest against theology functionalized into a program of strategic planning for God. (1)

According to Diogenes Allen, the task of spiritual theology is twofold: to love God and to love neighbor (9). Allen's book, although written primarily in a Catholic tone, "dares to cross disciplinary, generic and denominational boundaries in order to appeal to all Christians to recall an ancient theological tradition that has almost been forgotten" (Astell par. 1). Allen suggests that widespread academic theology has neglected the field of spiritual theology (3).

Spiritual theology teaches how to live after conversion (justification) until death. The spiritual life is more about discipleship and the process of sanctification in Christ. Spiritual theology focuses on integrating the active and contemplative lives. A distinction between the two is personified in the example of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus

in the New Testament (Allen 11). Mary, who was rebuked by Martha for sitting and listening to Jesus teach, was affirmed by the Lord: “You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42, NLT). Mary was rewarded for sitting and “contemplating” Jesus’ words while Martha was reprovved for her activity.

According to the early Church as well as the Eastern Orthodox tradition, these aspects of contemplation versus activity are to be treated as “two tendencies within one person’s life rather than a symbol of different kinds of lives” (Allen 11). Therefore, absolute contrast between the active and contemplative life is unnecessary (97).

Active contemplation for youth ministry engages students to participate in the spiritual disciplines and incorporates them as habits into their hearts, minds, and souls. Although Mary was physically still, and sitting at the feet of Jesus, her mind and spirit were almost certainly awake with active contemplation. The purpose of this study encourages integration of active contemplation as well as enhanced awareness and practice of these spiritual disciplines in the spiritual life (18).

A Theology of Grace

A second emphasis is the underlying theme of the theology of grace. According to the Donald K. McKim, God acts toward the world in grace while acknowledging his gracious activities in history and in the process of salvation (121). The theology of grace, as understood by John Wesley, involves a process of salvation including prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace (“God’s Preparing” par. 2).

Prevenient grace is God’s favors that “comes before” a person responds to God’s act of justification through conversion (McKim 120). Wesley called it “preparing grace”

and said it was “free for all, as well as in all” (“Free Grace” sec. I, par. 2). Grace offers God’s love and salvation without force, requirement, or demand. God offers this grace as resistible, allowing persons to choose whether or not to follow him. A vehicle for prevenient grace in the contemplative youth ministry model is offering youth the opportunity to experience and practice the classic spiritual disciplines. Youth have the freedom to engage or refrain from such practices. Regardless of the youth’s response to God’s love through the person of Jesus Christ, this grace is offered. The practices serve as a means by which God’s grace might be known (Phil. 3:8-10; Luke 1:4; Rom. 11:33), his love extended, and a step taken toward justification.

Justifying grace is offered to persons who choose to receive salvation and forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24, 28; 5:1; 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:24). According to Wesley, “The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, hereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son.” (“Justification” sec. II, par. 5). Youth have the opportunity to receive justification through the retreat model. This model established growth toward sanctification and results in the conversion of youth who have yet to make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ. The intention of this study was to present creative practices that would assist youth in experiencing justifying grace.

The final aspect of Wesley’s theology of grace is that of sanctifying grace which comes after prevenient and justifying grace. This grace empowers one to live as a disciple of Christ (McKim 121). Wesley believed once a person was justified, having accepted God’s redemptive grace, that person carried on in God’s sustaining grace toward perfection. This process of sanctification, which is marked by works of righteousness

given by God's Holy Spirit, is the living out of the Christian life. In his sermon "The Repentance of Believers," Wesley says, "And this repentance and faith are full as necessary, in order to our *continuance* and *growth* [emphasis mine] in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God" ("Repentance of Believers" par. 3). The contemplative youth ministry model encourages persons to develop classic spiritual disciplines habits that facilitate the process of sanctification as disciples of Christ (Phil. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:5).

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 anchors the current study in literature related to the relevance of teaching spiritual formation of youth, the review of six primary spiritual disciplines, and an overview of the retreat ministry model. Chapter 3 describes the process and methods used to answer the research questions. Chapters 4 reports the data collected through the project, and Chapter 5 involves discussion of this study through three lenses: (1) personal experience, (2) literature, and (3) theological foundations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

Youth workers have realized in recent years, through a changing culture, the need for programming in youth ministry that goes deeper than miniature golf, LaserTag, and paint-by-numbers Bible studies. Programming focuses not on entertainment, activity-driven ministry, or even on a one-size-fits-all Bible study lesson. The growing need leans on cultivating lasting commitments and relationships with God and others in the age of a shifting generation. In postmodernism where “every premise is questioned,” the Bible is no longer foundational or accepted, and absolute truth is nonexistent, thought must be given as how to reach a millennial generation (Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry 22-29). The world is shifting from modern to postmodern values. Modern values such as tradition, science, and reason are being replaced with postmodern values that involve experimental, spiritual, and pluralistic ways of thought.

Nevertheless, in the midst of an emerging culture of new thought and practice, spiritual disciplines are being “rediscovered and applied to youth ministry” (Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry 190). Many are adopting these ancient spiritual disciplines, involving “mysticism and metaphor which are perfectly suited to the postmodern mind” (37). “Free-thought, experimentation, creativity, global understanding, and authentic experiences with God and the church are now being introduced and accepted” (191).

As a result, the return to Christian spiritual formation, which includes the “spiritual, mystical side of faith” (Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry 193), has been reawakened for the development of the adolescent soul. The need for depth of

discipleship and attentiveness to God involves returning to proven methods to develop one's soul. Although not much curriculum exists in this area, youth workers must now take the ancient practices and apply them to postmodern youth ministry models (193).

Spiritual Formation as a Means to Faith Development

For thousands of years, Christians have been involved in practices that have spiritually formed, shaped the soul and brought an added awareness to God's presence. Although these practices are not new, each generation benefits from a reawakening of these disciplines for spiritual growth.

Although spiritual formation is a well-explored field of study, not much is available regarding its application to youth and adolescents. Even less curriculum exists for teaching the spiritual disciplines to youth in retreat. Spiritual formation of youth is brought within the context of the church's history and tradition. It is based on Scripture and nurtured in the local church. Spiritual formation of youth is the key to enabling youth to mature in their relationship with Jesus Christ and to become committed and faithful members of the Church in a postmodern world.

One of the recent writings on "soul tending" for youth ministry is The Godbearing Life by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster. Dean and Foster emphasize the importance of youth workers to become "Godbearers"—to bring Jesus literally to the world just as Mary the mother of Jesus did (18). They utilize the term "incarnational" ministry through which God takes on flesh, as he did through Jesus Christ. Spiritual formation among youth begins when youth leaders become incarnational representatives of Jesus Christ to youth. Teenagers must have Godbearers in their lives in order to grow in their faith journeys.

Youth leaders are like John the Baptist who helped point the way to the Savior (Dean and Foster 27). They emphasize not a program but the person (29). In a continuum model for youth ministry, Godbearers are called to be missionaries rather than program leaders. Youth leaders are thus sent out and called to be faithful in the evangelization of youth. Their objective is not to be activity directors but to be spiritual guides and friends by loving youth into God's kingdom (35). The art of soul tending, to serve as Godbearers, is to instruct and guide youth along the path toward Christ. Godbearers guide teens through the "practices of the soul" (105).

Spiritual Disciplines in Youth Ministry

Christian practices mark and create followers of Christ (Dean and Foster 107). When one risks teaching youth these practices, spiritual formation becomes the "primary curriculum for youth ministry" (106). The suggestion is that one "risks transformation—not only in adolescents, but in ourselves" (106). Merging the spiritual disciplines with youth ministry models serve as "means of grace by which God strengthens individuals and the church to live faithfully" as well as "shape our identity in Jesus Christ" (107-09).

To become a Godbearer in the lives of youth, one must teach and base programming around the classic Christian spiritual disciplines of spiritual formation. One must also become shaped by these practices in order to grow in attentiveness to God.

When I graduated college and was considering seminary, I went to work for a Christian retreat center for adults where spiritual formation was the focal point. I began to learn and practice these disciplines. They strengthened my identity with Christ and shaped my intention to teach them to youth. I began to learn how pivotal these disciplines were in order to form and create an incarnational youth ministry. The spiritual

disciplines, when taught to teens, enable them to strive toward maturity in their depth of relationship to Jesus Christ.

In the foreword to Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students by Richard R. Dunn, Doug Fields writes, “We cannot program students to Christ or entertain them into spiritual maturity ... the DNA within a healthy and effective youth ministry is quality relationships” (10). Focus is given to the nurturing of the spiritual lives of youth. The key to spiritual success in youth ministry is to “pace, then lead” (Dunn 142). Pacing is the language of love for good parenting and for productive youth ministry. Pacing requires listening to the heart of youth and seeing beyond words, actions, and behaviors to the person (16). In order to “pace” effectively, one must realize the importance of making space for God. To make this space, one must “fashion opportunities for our children and adolescents to encounter God directly, personally” (143).

Dunn’s emphasis upon the spiritual development of students is more about developing spiritual caregivers to create space for postmodern adolescents for growth spiritually rather than on an intentional practice of spiritual disciplines as a means to spiritual formation (143). In other words, Dunn offers five places through which students can grow and experience the presence of God. These include a relational safe place, a meaningful learning place, an experimental worshiping place, an interpersonal prayer place, and a cultural impact place (144). The six primary spiritual disciplines used in this study can find room in each of these “places.” Worship, prayer, study, service, celebration, and fasting are naturally transported into these creative places as a means to spiritual formation of youth. Dunn believes in order to shape spiritual lives of students one must first create an experiential opportunity for such growth. Teaching the spiritual

disciplines to youth requires intentionality and creative instruction through which youth can embrace and develop habits of faith.

Yaconelli has done creative instruction with youth and the spiritual disciplines. Together with the Lilly Endowment Fund, Yaconelli developed the Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project (YMSP). This project involved sixteen churches representing many denominations to experiment in a contemplative approach to youth ministry. The tools used have helped young people participate in spiritual practices at youth groups and events (“Ancient-Future Youth Ministry” par. 14). They have encouraged participating churches to commit to building a community of disciples, a liturgy of discernment, and a habit of contemplative practices. The goal is to give young people the “space, time, tools and encouragement to directly place themselves before God” (par. 13). Both modern and traditional forms of spiritual exercises have been incorporated into youth programs.

Findings from the YMSP show a drop in youth ministers who burn out, a growing edge of young people eager to learn about spiritual practices, a greater discernment and impact in programming, and church-wide renewal in almost all the churches in the project (Yaconelli, “Ancient-Future Youth Ministry” par. 20-27). These findings give evidence for the benefits and effectiveness of teaching the spiritual disciplines to youth.

In Soul Shaper, Jones writes that “people are harking back to the spiritual disciplines and to the classic, orthodox theology that have defined the church for centuries, and they are applying what they find to the practice of youth ministry” (18). Jones seeks to teach students about the spiritual disciplines in new and meaningful ways that will help grow faith rather than bore them with ritual and routine. Nevertheless,

he hopes first to engage youth pastors in these disciplines so they may then apply them to youth ministry.

Tony Jones offers ancient practices for Christian formation divided into two sections: contemplative and bodily approaches. Contemplative approaches, or *via contemplative*, rely upon bodily silence and stillness. Bodily approaches, or *via active*, are practices in which physical engagement such as fasting or walking is required (Soul Shaper 20). The absolute division between body and spirit, according to Jones, is a false dichotomy because of the impossibility in separating the two completely. Jones admits the distinction is somewhat artificial but nevertheless serves as a helpful reminder that people are called to live lives in the spiritual and physical realms (20).

Valerie E. Hess and Marti Watson Garlett emphasize the importance of raising children and adolescents with the spiritual disciplines as seen in Foster's work. Practicing the disciplines invites God to change a person, make him or her more like Jesus, and enhance the relationship shared with God, others, and the world (14). Teaching spiritual disciplines to children means giving spiritual direction to young disciples who will "imitate much more of what we do than what we say" (14). This instruction plants within youth and children formative tools that will stick with them for the rest of their lives.

Encouragement is given to the reader to apply the spiritual disciplines to the lives of their families and children emphasizing both individuality and community. The danger is for the spiritual disciplines to become one more activity within the life of the family or youth group (Hess and Garlett 15). Activities just keep people busy, but practicing the disciplines in light of a growing relationship with Jesus Christ leads to maturation and formation.

Hess and Garlett offer specific instruction on understanding, practicing, and teaching the spiritual disciplines (15). Also, they emphasize the importance for adults and leaders to implement the spiritual disciplines into their lives before teaching them to others. They suggest the disciplines as a means of bringing glory to and enjoying God.

Karen Marie Yust emphasizes the importance of teaching spiritual formation to children. Yust insists faith is given to children as well as adults as a “gracious act of God” (13). Faith is, therefore, a gift from God. Faith transforms peoples’ lives, and “spiritual practices facilitate faith’s transformative work because they link us to God” (13).

Yust promotes six themes linked to spirituality among children: belonging, thanksgiving, giftedness, hospitality, understanding, and hope (19). Involvement in the spiritual disciplines enables the child to be embraced by God, give thanks to God, accept the gifts from God, share those gifts with others, reflect on one’s own spiritual experience, and expect more of human experience than what one is currently experiencing (14-19). Contemplative youth ministry engages in an understanding of these six themes in order to instruct youth in creative ways to practice the spiritual disciplines and to increase attentiveness to God and an overall spiritual well-being. The purpose of these spiritual disciplines is to increase an awareness of the presence of God in their lives and to help them grow in grace.

The practices of the Christian community provide the framework for human spiritual faith development (Dean 150). Youth might encounter Christ in various experiences, but the primary means of growing in faith is through community. According to Kenda Creasy Dean, “God’s chosen location for transformation is in the Christian community” (151). Dean suggests many scholars have adapted classical categories of

Christian practices for the contemporary church and for youth ministry specifically (154-55). The purpose of the classic practices is transformation—to become more like Christ. These practices are “meaningful human actions that mark us as, and shape us into, people who follow Jesus” (156). They also “comprise the constituent elements for a way of life that God acts in and through to infuse grace into the world” (156).

Dean suggests the spiritual disciplines do not simply remind people of historic events and traditions but also incorporate young people into the Christian community (157). These practices offer more than entertainment, activities, or effective programming; they are “transformational connection(s) to Christ’s life, death and resurrection” (157-58). A model for contemplative youth ministry seeks to transform the identity of students into a Christian community passionately pursuing full attention to God and his Holy Spirit.

The unifying principle of the classic Christian practices is “their common referent in the suffering love of Christ” (Dean 152). According to Dean, the *pathos* of Christ is the only “safeguard the church has against time-bound, culture-bound, or style-bound Christianity” (152-53). In the Greek, *pathos* implies “suffering.” Pathos is “deep compassion for others. The term is used for the sharing of sufferings that Christians are called upon to enter into with others,” as well as through “God’s compassion for the world and suffering in Jesus Christ” (McKim 204). Through this *pathos* the gospel is proclaimed in language, tongue, and tradition through the practices of the spiritual disciplines and becomes a community transformed by the suffering of Christ (Dean 152).

Promoting the spiritual practices to youth should be the focus of youth ministry curriculum. These practices do not simply lead to belief in God, but they also “shape our

beliefs in God” (Dean 161). Taking youth through the spiritual disciplines infuses them into the acts of spiritual formation and also heightens the level of adolescent discipleship (161). Dean says that since the goal of Christianity is sanctification and not individualism, then a life of persistent holiness and not just a one-time conversion is the objective. The spiritual disciplines, when taught to youth, are a transforming element leading them to an understanding of the *pathos* of Christ and an increased awareness of the Spirit of God in their lives. Practicing these disciplines, under the guise of contemplative youth ministry, is a means of transforming ineffective youth ministry models into life-giving discipleship patterns.

Six Primary Spiritual Disciplines

“Practices are God’s multifaceted means of grace in the material world of human interaction, conduits of love that enliven our witness and that imbue us with the grace that makes holy passion possible” (Dean 151). Dean and Foster give thirty-eight examples of Christian practices; Foster lists just twelve spiritual disciplines. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun lists sixty-two specific practices for youth, and Jones offers sixteen disciplines. This study focused on six “primary” spiritual disciplines: worship, prayer, study, service, celebration, and fasting. These six disciplines fall into the categories of inward, outward, or corporate disciplines (Foster ii). They were chosen because they include a wide range of disciplines that help connect persons to themselves, to others, and to God. Also, in light of the target group of this study, United Methodist youth, these disciplines are somewhat familiar and provide a faith tradition in which growth might occur. In addition, the primary six disciplines can incorporate six complementary or secondary disciplines,

as supported by Foster, which include meditation, simplicity, solitude, submission, confession, and guidance.

For example, meditation can be practiced as an inward discipline during prayer, fasting, or study. Simplicity, solitude, and submission as outward disciplines can be practiced in association with service, and confession and guidance as corporate primary disciplines can be integrated through worship or celebration. In an effort to create a platform for which a contemplative youth ministry model might be developed, six primary disciplines were emphasized.

The purpose of the following section is to outline each of the six primary spiritual disciplines in order to construct a foundation for a contemplative youth ministry model for youth in retreat settings. I have examined each discipline while giving biblical, theological, and practical support for its use at youth camp.

Worship

According to McKim, the word “worship” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *weorthscipe*, which means “to honor.” Worship is mentioned as the first spiritual discipline because it is the center around which all the other disciplines revolve. If one were to picture a wheel, worship would serve as the hub while the other five primary disciplines—prayer, study, service, celebration, and fasting—as the spokes.

Worship is an ordered way of acting and living that brings one before God and allows him to transform the person (Foster 144). For Christians, worship is both the praise people owe God and the means by which God’s grace strengthens and guides them (Bartlett). It is the response to the “overtures of love from the heart of the Father. The

central reality of worship is found in the response of God's people to live in spirit and in truth" (Foster138).

Scripture is full of references to worship involving commands to worship (Exod. 20:3-6, 23-24) and instructions on how to worship (Exod. 24:1). In Exodus 34:14, Moses tells the Israelites to "worship no other gods, but only the Lord, for he is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you." Deuteronomy 11:16 states, "But do not let your heart turn away from the LORD to worship other gods."

The spiritual discipline of worship for the Christian stems from Scripture. Worship serves as a means to grow in attentiveness to God through various forms. Worship can be traditional or contemporary, modern or postmodern, structured or emergent, meditative or highly expressive. It can be practiced in community or alone, in a building or in the wilderness. The pattern by which people worship God is a reflection of culture, theology, tradition, and demographics.

Jesus spoke about worship in John 4:23: "But the time is coming and is already here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship him that way." Practicing the discipline of worship implies maintaining God as the "object of our worship" and making worship a priority in our lives (Foster 139). St. Francis knew the importance of worship (or the Mass) by calling it "the heart of our Christian religion." He writes, "Take part in the public exercises of your parish and any local usages it promotes" (qtd. in Foster 58-60). St. Francis continues by saying the holy Sacrifice, the sacrament of communion, is "our most holy, sacred and proud Sacrament and the very soul of piety, the mystery in which God really communicates himself and gloriously showers his graces and favors on us" (58).

Worship, as the first spiritual discipline, is a necessary practice for contemplative youth ministry; however, new and creative worship styles should be promoted to bridge the postmodern and emergent youth culture. The contemplative youth ministry model of worship involves a multisensory youth service involving a band, speaker, video projection, and a number of interactive stations. These stations might include foot washing, Holy Communion, an altar with candles, clay for sculpting, and butcher paper with markers for written prayers. They are offered at the beginning of worship and remain so throughout the entire experience with no precise structure to the worship. This type of youth service is a smorgasbord that allows the participants the freedom to attend to that which draws them at the moment. The music and message are intertwined throughout the service but always with the intent that the worshipper may choose to participate in a station rather than give one's attention to the speaker. The freedom of experience allows the worshipper to respond in his or her own creative ways by taking the initiative to attend a station or to remain seated. Nevertheless, to remain in one's seat means the stage presentation (the worship music and the pastoral message) are the primary means by which this seated participant hears and responds to the Word.

Because today's youth are extremely visual and active, this contemplative practice invites them into a deeper awareness of the presence of God while stimulating their multisensory and creative side. According to this study, worship is not necessarily contemplative in the sense of being meditative or quiet but contemplative in keeping with the Latin word *contemplari*, meaning "to survey." This multisensory worship experience enables youth to review and join the worship landscape at will.

Worshippers have the freedom and permission to participate in any, all, or none of the stations. The idea is to emphasize a theology of experience in agreement with Wesley's theology who "stressed the importance of experience as a source for one's theology" (Grider). One important aspect is evidenced in Wesley's teaching on the witness of the Spirit:

But I contend not; seeing so many other texts, with the experience of all real Christians, sufficiently evidence, that there is in every believer, both the testimony of God's Spirit, and the testimony of his own, that he is a child of God. ("Witness of the Spirit")

The experience in worship involves the testimony of spirit with God's Spirit (Rom. 8:16). Wesley gives evidence to this theology of experience as a means of worship and personal witness and as an assurance of salvation:

The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. ("Witness of the Spirit")

The spiritual discipline of worship when practiced in a multisensory manner enables youth to experience active contemplation by increasing the awareness of God and enhancing an overall sense of spiritual well-being.

Prayer

The spiritual discipline of prayer stems from worship: "In the Bible prayer moves from the level of magic to the heights of spiritual communion and identification of will and activity with God. Prayer is attempted intercourse with God" (C. W. Smith). Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer (Luke 5:16).

Prayer is a natural overflow of a heart to God. It is a means by which humans communicate, express love, confess sins, and meditate, as well as offer praise and

thanksgiving to God. “Prayer places our understanding in the brightness of God’s light and exposes our will to the heart of his heavenly love” (De Sales 43).

In a recent study on prayer in schools conducted by the Gallup Organization, who surveyed 549 youths ages thirteen to seventeen in April and May 2005, 84 percent were in favor of offering a moment of silence and 58 percent were in favor of a spoken prayer without a specific religious reference.

Prayer brings people to the deepest and highest parts of the human spirit. Genuine prayer is both life creating and life changing and is the “central avenue God uses to transform us” (Foster 30). In a recent study in the July 2004 edition of Christianity Today, 24 percent of American teens say their prayers are answered “all the time.” The same study revealed 49 percent of teens who said they would like to attend prayer meetings before or after school. Prayer continues to be important in the lives of youth.

Jesus taught extensively on the subject of prayer. He gave instructions about prayer (Matt 6:5-13; Mark 11:25), spoke about the importance of prayer (Luke 11:9; Mark 11:24), revealed his own vulnerability through prayer (Mark 14:35; Matt. 26:36; Luke 22:44), demonstrated the healing power of prayer (Luke 4:18; Mark 1:29-34), and gave insight into his “prayer” relationship with his heavenly Father (Luke 6:12; Matt. 26:39; John 17:20-26). Jesus emphasized prayer as a means to increase one’s focus on God as well as to become a greater instrument of God’s power and redemptive grace.

The type of prayer used in this model of youth ministry is “contemplative prayer,” which according to Thomas Merton is “not so much a way to find God as a way of resting in him who we have found, who loves us, who is near us, who comes to us to draw us to himself” (Contemplative Prayer 29). Contemplation is understood as the

highest expression of the human beings' spiritual, mental, and intellectual life in order to connect to God (New Seeds 1). It is a means by which the Holy Spirit becomes more and more present and important as one progresses in the life of interior, contemplative prayer (Contemplative Prayer 41).

A prayer that fulfills this purpose is meditative, expressive, personal, and filled with deep passion. "Contemplation is also the response to a call: a call from Him who has no voice, and yet Who speaks in everything that is" (Merton, New Seeds 3).

Contemplative prayer as a spiritual discipline invites participants to center upon Christ and to be conscious of "sin and redemption, wrath and mercy" (Contemplative Prayer 27).

Just as Jesus escaped to lonely places to pray (Mark 1:35), so the model offered here is an interior escape while maintaining a presence in community and focusing on solitude in the midst of others. One must "learn how to pray in the streets or in the country ... while waiting for a bus or riding a train" (Merton, Contemplative Prayer 216.) Contemplative prayer was practiced as a group but in individual solitude. Although participants were not resting from "exterior motion," a state of interior transcendence—to the One True God was a perpetual thought throughout the practice (51). Contemplative prayer was practiced as an exercise of communion with God in preparation for the youth to return to the community, school, and homes in which they lived.

This model for youth ministry involves an activity in which youth painted on one large white canvas in silence and mental solitude alongside a small group of their peers. Youth were asked to commit to a time of silent interior prayer with a focus upon Christ and with the Jesus Prayer upon their lips. The prayer will be silently repeated allowing

hearts to rest in God so that a visitation from him results in a “graced occurrence” (Edwards 40). After a given time, participants were invited to rest from this “prayer art” and spend the remaining time in meditation.

The spiritual discipline of prayer helps youth to center upon Christ, to “practice the presence of God” in every moment, to fellowship with others, and “to find joy in his divine company” (B. Lawrence 68).

Study

The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is the inner transformation of the person for the glory of God, which occurs most readily through the discipline of study (Foster 54). Henri J. M. Nouwen suggests “the discipline required of a leader who lives with outstretched hands ... [is the] discipline of strenuous theological reflection” (85). Study is required of all who truly seek to lead in the spirit of humility and grace.

The discipline of study is the renewal of the mind with the truth of Christ. It is the reshaping of inner patterns, thoughts, behaviors, and actions through engaging God’s Word and the truth that lies therein. Study is a form of meditation. Psalm 42:1 says, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.” St. Francis De Sales instructs us to “Listen with devotion to the word of God” (62). To study means to think about, to consider, and to contemplate on God, his Word, and his ways. Romans 12:2 best illustrates study as meditation:

Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul suggests believers allow God to transform them into new persons by changing their thought patterns. Through study, one considers

who God is and the message God has given. As a result of this meditative-study, Christian youth will know the Lord's plan and purpose for their lives.

Study, also termed as "formative reading" by Susan Muto, challenges to "listen with docility to spiritual directives found in texts of lasting value" (74). Muto suggests formative reading of Scripture is to read in order to receive the Word into the heart, meditate in order to understand its deeper meaning, and act out of a response of one's love for Christ and his Church (77). Reading Scripture implies change—a slow but sure transformation of a transcendent message written two millennia ago but relevant for today.

Study is not only the reading of a book for informational purposes, but also an examination and observation of God's creation and the surrounding culture. Study involves four steps: repetition of a thought or principle, concentration on a concept, comprehension of an ideal or ideas, and reflection upon God's truth made available for one's life (Foster 56-57). Study can be accomplished through reading but it is not limited therein as meditation serves as a key means to study, observation, and focus.

For youth, study involved watching a movie to search for God's truth therein or listening to lyrics of Christian songs and helping interpret them to a friend. Study finds a very natural place in contemplative youth ministry models because study is contemplation on the truths of God and his kingdom. Study can be practiced in a variety of forms, methods, and media.

For the purpose of this contemplative youth ministry model, the discipline of study was primarily practiced through both media and the written word. Participants watched three five-minute Christian music videos (Gone by Toby Mac, Take You Back

by Jeremy Camp, and Do Ya by Jump 5). After each video, they were given a one-page response sheet on which they made observations from the videos in relation to Scripture. The sheet contained four steps offered by Foster for study: repetition of a thought or principle, concentration on a concept, comprehension of an ideal or ideas, and reflection upon God's truth made available for one's life (56-57). The discipline of study involved interaction with media, meditation on God's word, discussion of ideas in small group, and application to one's life based on the overarching theme of the video.

The purpose of this exercise was to engage youth to think critically, search Scripture for life application, and grow in their attentiveness to God's presence in their lives. Further emphasis upon "study" came through additional small group interaction and individual Bible study meditations.

Service

Out of all the spiritual disciplines, service is the one most beneficial to the development of humility (Foster 113). John Maxwell writes that "servanthood is not motivated by manipulation or self-promotion. It is fueled by love" (137-38). Whereas many people will choose the limelight of upfront leadership, servanthood more often happens behind the scenes, away from the crowds, building up the church from below. Service and humility go hand in hand. According to Foster, when choosing to be a servant for Christ, one surrenders the right to choose whom and when to serve (115). Service is giving up of one's life, privileges, and position in order to bring glory to God by serving the church and others. Jesus said, "For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

The quality of servanthood involves one who puts others ahead of oneself, possesses the confidence to serve, initiates service to others, is not position conscious, and serves out of love (Maxwell 136-37).

In his book, Dr. Allan Coppedge includes becoming a servant as one of his key qualifications for becoming a disciple of Christ. Jesus is interested in character and in what disciples do with their lives (95). On Jesus' last night with his disciples, "Jesus embodies and models that servant role for the Twelve" (96). When he took off his outer garments and wrapped himself in a towel, he was taking on the very nature of a servant. Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world, became a servant.

Service symbolizes the nature of Jesus' life and ministry. From washing the feet of the disciples (John 13) to healing the dozens of sick and diseased, from cooking breakfast for his disciples after the resurrection (John 21) to crucifixion upon the cross for the sins of humanity (Luke 23:26-43), Jesus exemplified servanthood.

In my work with youth, I serve with many people. I often recruit people to come and serve as leaders at the youth camps and retreats of the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Out of all the people who serve with me in putting on youth ministries, three stand out as true servants—Wes, Mark, and Kristin. No matter what the needs are for the event, no matter what the demands of the job, no matter their positions of authority, these three serve without complaint. When the retreat is over and everyone has left, these three servants usually remain. When the demand calls for one to serve without recognition, they respond. They embody the servanthood of Jesus Christ.

Scripture speaks much about the nature of serving God's kingdom and God's people. James 4:10 says, "When you bow down before the Lord and admit your

dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.” Those who serve sidestep outward recognition and receive honor from God. Philippians 2 describes in detail the servant nature of Christ as one who did not “cling to his rights as God” (2:6), “made himself nothing” (2:7a), “took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form” (2:7b, c), and “obediently humbled himself ... by dying a criminal’s death on a cross” (2:8). Ephesians 6:7 says, “Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” As a result of serving the Lord comes the promise that God will “lift you up” (Phil. 2:9-10) and pour out blessings upon his people (Ezek. 11:19; Jer. 24:7; John 15:2).

From the earliest times in the life of the Hebrew people, God’s prophets called them to love and serve the Lord (Deut. 10:12-13), to obey and “serve him with all your heart and all your soul” (Josh. 22:5), and to “honor the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly” (Josh. 24:14) by putting away idols. Joshua, the successor of Moses says, “But as for me and my family we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:25). Joshua set a standard for his family and a precedence for an entire nation to turn back to God.

The Hebrew word עָבַד or *abad*, as found in Joshua 24, implies two uses of the word “to serve.” According to the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible the first implies to labor, work, or service as subjects with whole-hearted devotion and submission to the will of God (C.W.F. Smith). These original and early followers understood how to follow and obey God’s purpose and will for their lives. Whereas the first definition refers to an inward devotion, the second implies outward acts that may be observed and measured such as serving God in the performance of rituals in the sanctuary. Joshua 24:14-18 refers

to inner devotion to God yet without devaluing the notion that ritual performance is service (Creach).

The spiritual discipline of service is significant for a contemplative youth ministry model because it helps shape within youth a spirit of humility to God and others. The results of this discipline are humility in prayer, great attentiveness to God in worship, and the ability to embrace fasting.

For the purpose of this study, the practice of the discipline of service was experienced in several ways. First, youth participants studied the lesson of Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples and then engaged in a foot-washing service within the context of their small group. Second, participants received a list of possible areas to serve within the camp from work in the kitchen to setting and cleaning up the worship space, from participating in an all-night prayer vigil to simple tasks of picking up trash around the camp. Finally, youth were encouraged by small groups to engage daily in a single act of random and intentional service to others and to share these acts at the end of the day in small groups. The works of service were shared not as boasts but as acts of service in the church after the example of Christ: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Celebration

"Celebration is at the heart of the way of Christ" (Foster 163). Joy is central to the message of Christianity, whether it be joy in suffering, joy through obedience, or joy as expressed in worshipping. The contemplative youth ministry retreat model enables youth to experience and practice the discipline of celebration in a Christian context. It allows

them to find creative and clean ways to celebrate and experience joy. “In the spiritual life only one thing will produce genuine joy, and that is obedience” (164).

Celebratory joy sets Christianity apart from other religions. Rev. Richard Freeman, a United Methodist pastor who visited India, observed thousands of Hindu people perform a ceremonial cleansing in the great River Ganges. According to Hinduism.co.za, an online reference to beliefs, rituals, and festivals, the Hindus believe that taking a dip in the river will wash away one’s sins: “Hundreds of sacrifices cannot produce that merit which men of restrained souls are capable of acquiring by bathing in the sacred waters of Ganga” (Hindu.co.za, par. 5). Freeman not only observed the irony of the washing away of one’s sins in a “dirty river,” one known for collecting large amounts of human pollutants, but also spoke of the lack of joy expressed on the faces of those returning from the river ceremony.

The classic Christian discipline of celebration embraces the joy of God’s nature, creation, and glory. A theology of God’s glory surrounds the significance of this discipline. *Glory* is defined as “exalted praise and honor” (McKim 114). Paul suggests in his second letter to the Corinthian church, “In fact, the first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new covenant” (2 Cor. 3.10). Paul says because the Old Covenant was glorious the New Covenant will be filled with more of God’s glory. As a result, those filled with God’s Holy Spirit who reflect “with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (v. 18). Celebration is about finding within God’s Holy Spirit the deep-seated joy based not on temporal understandings but reliant upon God’s promises of life and freedom.

The actual phrase *theology of glory* was coined by Martin Luther for the “current speculative, scholastic theology that emphasized God’s glorious attributes rather than the divine self-revelation in the Passion of the Christ” (McKim 281). Luther wanted to emphasize God’s revelation of himself through Jesus Christ rather than a “means of philosophy or ethics” (Luther). A new understanding of a theology of glory is one focused on Christ and reflecting his character through the power of the Holy Spirit. All Christians are called to reflect God’s glory and nature to a world in hopes of convincing that world of God’s divine love and grace. Christians do not add to God’s glory but merely recognize and acknowledge it and thus live within his glory as the human “creation” responds to the divine Creator (Huttar par. 12).

This study sought to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth. Helping youth understand a theology of glory, which is equated as “celebration,” enables youth to practice the presence of God in their lives.

Celebration comes as a means of God’s glorious presence upon the life of an individual who is called by God. The Virgin Mary is a good example of one who experienced celebration. When the angel Gabriel comes to Mary to tell her she is favored by God and will give birth to the Messiah, Mary is initially troubled, perhaps due to her virginity and betrothal to Joseph (Luke 1:29-34); however, Mary’s anxiety turns to celebration: “Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and now generation after generation will call me blessed. For he, the Mighty One, is holy, and he has done great things for me” (Luke 1:46-49). Mary is an example of one who responded in joyful praise to God as a result of the Lord’s call and promise upon her life.

In order to deepen youth's understanding of God's presence in their lives, and to increase their spiritual attentiveness to his glory, practicing the discipline of celebration is important.

Celebration was practiced in the contemplative youth ministry model through a variety of means. First, celebration became a part of the entire worship experience through praise. Praise, which comes from the Latin word *pretium* meaning "worth," implies honor and adoration, which is offered to the Lord as a means of celebration for God's presence and is "a constant biblical ascription and injunction that creatures should praise God as the Lord" (McKim 215). Praise is practiced in the multisensory worship experience by involving stations giving honor to God. One of these stations involved writing the attributes of God upon a notepad on the altar. This notepad was read aloud by the worship leader. A second worship station involved youth writing prayers and praises to God upon two large sheets of paper upon the floor near the front of the worship center. The sheets were spread out upon the ground with a numerous assortment of colored markers for those who felt led to respond in this way.

A third practice of praise was to weave within the camping experience itself times for structured recreation, relaxation, and theme parties to enhance celebration. The emphasis was upon teaching youth means to celebrate God's presence and fellowship with other Christians in positive ways.

These practices have value as they embody activities "that involve the whole person in doing what Jesus did and commanded" (McKim 251). They are events that engage participants in a direct response to God's grace rather than mere "verbal

admonition,” which is limited in its “appeals to the intellect” (251). In essence, the practice of the discipline of celebration enables youth to experience the joy of Christ.

Fasting

One classic definition of fasting is “the abstinence of food for the purpose of religious devotion and spiritual discipline” (McKim 102). Fasting is the letting go of any desire or appetite in order to focus and seek God on matters of faith, direction, and purpose for oneself, others, and the world (Calhoun 218). It clears one’s mind and opens one up intentionally to seeking God’s will and grace in a way that goes beyond normal habits of worship and prayer (219). Fasting is often the most ignored spiritual discipline among the six primary disciplines listed. (People appear to be “fasting” from fasting.)

Fasting carries a mystique about it, leading some to leave it to those in monasteries and the ultra-spiritual. Some believe it has received a bad reputation as a result of “excessive ascetic practices” in the Middle Ages (Foster 41). According to Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., fasting has been lost in today’s society, especially in Protestantism (“Spiritual Disciplines”). Others believe the influence from society that one must eat three large meals a day, indulge in every type of obtainable pleasure, make a variety of online purchases spontaneously, and as the old adage suggests, “do what feels right.” For those reasons, fasting brings with it a stigma of being countercultural and unpopularity unmatched by the other primary six disciplines. As a result, fasting is the most radical discipline with the greatest potential for creating a greater acknowledgement of the presence of God within the lives of youths.

Fasting is a foreign concept for twenty-first century youth because it has to do with American consumerism and media influence. Youth from every angle are being

shaped by music, media, and culture, which are defining their values, ethics, and morals. Youth are not the only ones to blame because adults are the ones marketing the music, producing the media, and, in some sense, abandoning youth to face life alone (Clark 50). Fasting is a deliberate means to turn away from the pleasures of the world and to make oneself available for Christ (Foster and Griffin 69).

According to a 1998 survey by the Barna Group, 83 percent of teenagers desire a comfortable lifestyle. While nothing is wrong with enjoying the benefits of possessions, American culture has taken consumerism to the extreme. Nevertheless, according to religious activities, Barna reports nearly nine out of ten youth pray weekly. Refocusing upon this discipline as a means to grow in grace is required when practicing the discipline of fasting. Seeking awareness of God is not the only desire. Youth in today's culture, like any other, need to be molded by Christ. The purpose of fasting is, therefore, to encourage a depth of dependence upon Jesus as a source for maturation, future direction, and morality. Fasting, like the other spiritual disciplines, can be a source of encouragement not only to increase spirituality but also to engage youth in developing habits to help form "ethical and moral belief systems and behaviors" (Clark 157).

Fasting is not just about food. For adolescents, fasting is more about developing a habit of disciplining oneself in a variety of ways. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun suggests youth consider abstaining from music, drink, shopping, desserts, e-mail, cell phones, computer games, television, and movies (218). The purpose is to encourage youth to refrain from any "excessive attachments or appetites" in order to seek God intentionally. Fasting is a "voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual

activity” (Foster and Griffin 61). It is a means by which God’s Holy Spirit enters into the apparent void (of the object from which one is abstaining) and fills the soul with grace.

After Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River (Luke 3:12), he was taken by the Holy Spirit into the desert for a time of fasting “where the Devil tempted him for forty days. He ate nothing all that time and was very hungry” (Luke 4:2). This time of testing was a preparation for ministry and focus for Jesus. It implies fasting to be an instrument God uses to clarify his plans in life. It also suggests the possibility of temptation in the midst of practicing the discipline.

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus gives clear instructions on one’s appearance and attitude when fasting. He also talks about being discrete and even secret when fasting: “But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will suspect you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in secret. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you” (Matt. 6:17-18). The reward of the fast comes from the Lord rather than those who see what you do or how you act.

Wesley, an Anglican priest and founder of the Methodist Church, was known to fast twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays. In Wesley’s own words, fasting is a “means which God himself has ordained, and in which therefore, when it is duly used, he will surely give us his blessing” (“Upon Our Lord’s Sermon”). Wesley understood fasting as a means by which God’s grace is made manifest in a person’s life. Although Wesley gives many reasons for fasting, the one primarily used for this study is to “help in prayer” (“Upon Our Lord’s Sermon”).

Like the other disciplines examined for a contemplative youth ministry retreat model, fasting had several applications in the life of the camp. The first was the most

familiar—to give youth an opportunity to refrain from a meal as a community. This time was replaced by a focused time of solitude, prayer, and journaling. A second opportunity was an individual fast from an item or object as a number of options were presented. Calhoun’s suggestion to fast from music, media, desserts, or a particular behavior was also observed.

Youth and Retreat Ministry

The greatest method in developing youth spirituality is through the use of retreats.

Foundations for Retreats

During the last five to six thousand years, the Hebrew people have been involved in retreats, which have had a “long and varied history” (Sheldrake 541). Jesus often called his disciples to “get away from the crowds for a while and rest” (Mark 6:31). The idea of initial origin for a retreat can be traced back to the Council of Nicaea (325) after the forty-day season of Lent. In the mid 1500s, pilgrimages as well as retreats came about during the Catholic Reformation (541). As many as thirteen Franciscan hermitages were in existence in Europe during that time (Calhoun 67). However, recently, the habit of retreating among Christians has fallen out of practice.

As with Jesus and his disciples, the purpose of retreat includes rest, renewal, and spiritual revitalization. The classic Christian spiritual disciplines are often used as guidelines for participants to grow in their relationship with God. The types of retreat are numerous: from private to community retreats, from silent to celebratory retreats (Sheldrake 542). The types of retreats and the age of the participants vary greatly as the common thread of Christian retreats is to come away from the world temporarily in order to refocus, nurture one’s inner spirit, and spend some time alone with God (Calhoun 67).

Retreats have a significant role in ministry to youth as a means to evangelism. Due to the fact that a majority of people are accepting Jesus Christ as Savior before reaching their eighteenth birthday, and that the weekend church service is “no longer the primary mechanism for salvation decisions,” research suggests camps and retreats are relevant means for adolescent conversions (Barna, “Evangelism”). Retreats have proven a major means by which conversion, spiritual growth, and a realization of a call to ministry among youth occurs. Youth retreats offer moments for students to escape from the realities of everyday life, cluster with a group of other seekers, and encounter God afresh away from iPods, cell phones, the Internet, and peers in order to concentrate on spiritual growth.

As a result of the success of retreats and youth camps for the purpose of evangelism, discipleship, and renewal, many youth ministry resources include at least a short chapter on such activities. Several books include specific guidelines, practices, and exercises focusing upon spiritual formation of youth. These guidelines help bridge the gap between youth ministry, spiritual formation, and retreat ministry.

Review of Retreat-Related Literature

In her book, Amy Simpson offers ideas for practicing the spiritual disciplines in retreat. Although not extensive, Simpson’s ideas are somewhat simplistic yet helpful. For example, for “confession” Simpson suggests youth to “tell God about sins you’ve committed in the past” (83). An assumption is made that youth understand the meaning of confession and will practice this discipline of their own free will. The book does include three complete pages of “Ideas for practice,” which can be used by youth on retreats.

Like Simpson's book, Walt Marcum writes a chapter entitled, "A Spiritual Life Retreat." Marcum's book provides youth workers with "tools, activities, experiences, and support to encourage Christian spiritual formation in youth" particularly in the areas of prayer, worship and small groups (back cover). Marcum offers a daily schedule, detailed exercises, and activities for the retreat, prayer journal assignments, and Bible study lessons. The final chapter, entitled "Silver Bullets for Spiritual Growth," offers several very comprehensive, involved, and creative experiential exercises for youth such as Peter's Walk, Romans and Christians, Catacomb Worship, Trust Village, Lifeline/Unseen Hands, The Shepherd's Voice, Abraham's Journey, and 3-D Mine-field (131-57).

Youth Ministry in the 21st Century suggests to be "the encyclopedia of practical ideas" and holds up to this claim. This resource offers over two hundred pages with one hundred practical activities and exercises for youth to develop faith, Bible knowledge, worship experiences, service and missions' emphasis, as well as community-building ideas. This resource is backed by extensive research conducted through the National Study of Youth and Religion, funded by the Lilly Endowment, in which a national telephone survey with 3,370 parent-teen pairs was conducted (R. Lawrence 10). The purpose of this survey was to provide reliable sociological data about adolescent religion, the needs of teenagers, and the issues they face (12). As a result of the survey, this book was written by selecting eight specific conclusions critical for the moral and spiritual development of youth. Although this resource is not specifically one of spiritual formation or retreat ministry, it does provide valuable research and practical ideas that can be implemented within the retreat process.

Another highly practical resource, which is easily incorporated into a contemplative youth ministry retreat model, is Worship Feast (White). This resource offers fifty complete multisensory worship services for youth consisting of prayer services, services for the spiritual journey, community-building services, and services for specific seasons. A final section offers music and songbooks, Web sites, and multimedia resources applicable for integration into a camp and retreat environment. Worship Feast offers worship for postmodern people who are “all about experience, deeply spiritual, pluralistic, all-accepting, philanthropic, community driven, environmentally aware, holistic and are on a quest for authenticity” (12). White suggests that to be multisensory means to be biblical. Ancient Hebrew worship involved incense, candles, singing, ritual washings, spoken prayers, banners, and dancing (13-14). Symbols such as crosses, icons, and stained glass are reminders of the need for visual aids. White encourages the use of projected and visual arts to experience the gospel in new and fresh ways.

Go Deeper Retreats offers twelve examples of retreat weekends for youth ministry. The strength of this resource is that it focuses upon the spiritual growth of youth in a retreat setting. It is also the single resource completely devoted to youth retreats. Whereas spiritual growth and discipleship is a priority, the practice of the spiritual disciplines is not primary even though disciplines such as worship and prayer are emphasized in the book. One retreat focus on prayer suggests “students will learn that true intimacy with God can be found in honest transparent communication with their Creator” (114). The exercises following this statement help teach youth about being real with God in worship and prayer yet fail to offer a variety of transcendent applications to

enhance the spiritual lives of students. The curriculum offers helpful “Quiet Time” journals as well as a complete schedule for each retreat.

The Experiential Youth Ministry Handbook serves as a resource book of ideas offering a very brief chapter on retreats and camps in which John Losey states that “camp programming is all about creating opportunities for God to speak and for us to listen” (137). This chapter talks about the significance of retreat ministry yet lacks any formative examples or innovative ideas. In some previous chapters, the book offers creative activities and “experiential” methods that can be found in a variety of other resources. This youth ministry handbook appeared to be a remake of older ideas and a repackaging of games and activities that were neither new nor original.

Another Youth Specialties resource is Camps, Retreats, Missions & Service Ideas (5). The book involves nearly two hundred ideas for planning events of all kinds. Although the resource is not specifically retreat based, it serves as a helpful tool through which ideas can be incorporated into a contemplative youth ministry retreat model. Several pages are devoted to different types of retreats and camps including programming, games, and a multitude of well-organized and well-detailed instructions for these activities.

Soul Care: How to Plan and Guide Inspirational Retreats is a compilation of a variety of retreats from several different sources. The types of retreats listed include church leadership, life passages, adventure, special group, and spirituality retreats (Stutzman 8-10). Although none of the retreats are designed specifically for youth, several, such as the “Parent-Child Camping,” the “Mountain Hike,” and the “Canoe Trip” appear to be more youth friendly. Most of the retreats suggested appear to be for adults

requiring a minimal amount of physical activity. The contemplative youth ministry model focuses upon active contemplation stimulating youth towards a deeper experience with Christ.

Perhaps the most helpful is the “Encountering the ‘I Am’: A Spiritual Formation Retreat.” This retreat resource emphasizes solitude and silence, while integrating exercise and taking hikes (Stutzman 341). The retreat model uses The Message version of the Bible, which is very appropriate and contemporary for youth. The Appendix offers a section entitled, “Praying the Scriptures: Lectio Divina” and “The Consciousness Examen: A Traditional Evening Prayer,” both insightful resources used in practices of contemplative prayer and solitude.

A final resource on retreat planning is The Retreat Planner’s Guide by Craig and Coletta Smith, which has worksheets, timelines, and checklists to planning retreats. This resource offers detailed information on organizing the event but not much about the theory, theology, or purpose behind it.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to create a contemplative youth ministry retreat model using six classic Christian spiritual disciplines. Review of current literature on youth ministry, spiritual formation and faith development suggests the absence of and the need for a contemplative youth ministry model. Very little literature presents a model by which the spiritual disciplines can be taught to youth in a retreat setting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Spiritual growth requires discipline (Marcum 13). One does not simply grow up as a person of mature faith without learning the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life. Just as the disciples of Jesus asked, “Lord, teach us to pray” (13), so these habits of intentionality must be taught. The very nature of adolescents is learning, discovery, and development. Whereas conversions occur most among those under the age of eighteen, so discipleship and formation can begin at an early age to develop habits leading to Christian maturity.

In the past, the Church has used the spiritual disciplines as a means to develop spiritual well-being (Rainwater 55). This study sought to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth through using the contemplative youth ministry model in a camp setting. No longer can youth groups that use only activity-gearred programs expect high levels of spiritual growth among students. Youth, like all persons, young or old, “can benefit from the strengths and freedoms the spiritual disciplines bring” (Hess and Garlett 13). Youth long for a depth of discipleship that far surpasses the traditional forms of “entertainment-based” youth ministry. The contemplative youth ministry model requires a purpose-based curriculum, a Christ-centered theme, a multisensory worship experience and encourages continued discipleship as important elements to effectiveness. These items are further discussed in Chapter 5.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry retreat model in the lives of youth through a weeklong camping experience. It was aimed at creating an awareness and practice of six classic Christian spiritual disciplines among youth in retreat. An outline of the curriculum can be found in Appendix E.

Research Question #1

What is the spiritual well-being of youth at the beginning of camp, and to what extent are youth presently engaged in the six Christian spiritual disciplines?

The answer to this question was the baseline for the study. In order to assess the spiritual condition of youth and their current practice of the spiritual disciplines, two questionnaires were given at the beginning of the summer camp experience. The first questionnaire, the Spiritual Well-Being scale (SWB), developed by Craig W. Ellison and Raymond F. Paloutzin, was given to youth and served as a “global psychological measure of one’s perception of spiritual well-being” (Hill and Hood 382). The SWB is holistic and broad in nature and measures the subjective nature of spiritual self-identity. This well-proven scale helps determine the overall sense of spiritual perception. It is one of the most widely used scales for research and clinical purposes (383).

The second scale, the Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS), was developed for the purpose of this study. This Likert scale helps measure the frequency with which the spiritual disciplines are practiced in the lives of youth. The SAS scale focuses solely on the six habits taught to youth in the Way2Live curriculum, created as the contemplative youth ministry model for this study.

The SAS scale is designed to measure the six spiritual disciplines. The design of the scale is grouped by five questions per discipline. The questions per discipline is as follows: worship—questions, 1, 7, 13, 19, 25; prayer—questions, 2, 8, 14, 20, 26; study—questions, 3, 9, 15, 21, 27; service—questions, 4, 10, 16, 22, 28; celebration—questions, 5, 11, 17, 23, 29; and fasting—questions, 6, 12, 18, 24, 30. All these questions are worded in the positive except for question 27, which is worded in reverse.

Research Question #2

What is the level of spiritual well-being among youth at the end of camp upon completion of the contemplative youth ministry model?

In order to receive an immediate response, the SWB scale was also administered to youth participants directly at the end of camp. This scale measured the immediate effectiveness of the contemplative youth ministry model in increasing the overall awareness of God and a sense of youth's spiritual well-being. The frequency of the measurement gives evidence to the significance of a spiritual formation retreat in the lives of youth.

The limitations of the study are such that participants were influenced by several outside variables: the effectiveness of the camp directors as leaders, the quality of communication of the speaker in explaining the six disciplines, the sense of connection youth felt with God and friends, the level of fun while learning about the classic spiritual disciplines as a means to spiritual growth, and the conduciveness of the retreat center itself in teaching the spiritual disciplines to youth. These are variables impossible to control.

Administering the SWB twice within one week might allow participants to remember their previous answers and perhaps be influenced from memory or perception of how one might wish for them to answer.

The advantage of administering the SWB twice in a week has benefits. The first distribution helped to capture the initial mind-set and spiritual presence of youth before they begin camp. The second administration, given at the end of the week, reflected the initial increase in spiritual well-being after completing the CYMM.

Research Question #3

To what extent are youth involved in the practice of the six Christian spiritual disciplines eight weeks after leaving camp?

Due to the timing of this experiment, youth had concluded summer and begun the school year. This particular timing gives validation for how youth responded in daily life as a return to school gets them back into their normal routine. The comparison of the two SAS tests evaluated a change in practice of the six habits from the time they first arrived at camp to eight weeks upon leaving.

One limitation of the SAS is that it lacks a tool to measure specific influences that enabled or inhibited the ongoing practice of the six spiritual disciplines. These factors might include peer influence, extracurricular activities, family life, or poor personal choices that deterred the youth from continuing to practice the six habits. A study by Brian Thomas Rainwater sheds light on this issue. Rainwater suggests that although youth make numerous commitments at camp, most fail to keep these commitments (80). For the purpose of this study, commitment level is not the problem; rather, the focus is on the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry model for increasing awareness and

practice of the classic spiritual disciplines as a means to overall spiritual well-being. The measurement is the extent by which youth are involved in the spiritual disciplines eight weeks after leaving camp.

Population and Location of the Study

The population for this study consisted of 204 youth participants who attended the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church summer camp. The students, both junior and senior high, all live in South Texas, an area with a projected population of 6,113,810 (Percept). Although the projected ethnic diversity by 2010 is expected to be 58.6 percent Hispanic, 35 percent Anglo, 3.8 percent African-American, and 2.6 percent Asian or other, almost 95 percent of youth attending summer camp are Anglo with 5 percent or less being Hispanic or African-American. Those wishing to duplicate this retreat model should take these limitations into consideration and adapt the curriculum and study findings accordingly. The summer camps were at Mount Wesley Retreat and Conference Center in Kerrville, Texas, and the H. E. Butt Foundation Camp near Leakey, Texas.

This study is limited in the sense that it measured the spiritual well-being of youth in only two camp environments of the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. The project is also limited by the relatively small number of youth participating from the SWTC. Out of the 204 youth who participated in the study, only forty completed all five surveys even after several attempts to secure the completed surveys. In order to increase validation, an additional forty students who completed the pre- and post- surveys, but not the follow-up surveys, were included for comparison. This study showed an extreme decrease in student participation once they left camp.

Although the number of subjects is limited, these findings may have direct impact upon the churches and local church youth ministry in the SWTC as a sampling of the youth as a whole. Application may be encouraged among other United Methodist conferences as well as youth ministry as a whole. The study sought to provide a contemplative youth ministry camp curriculum model that may be used in other camp or retreat settings.

All participants voluntarily participated in this study with parental consent because the subjects were 18 years or younger. Each youth was given an identification number consisting of four digits throughout the information-gathering process in order to maintain confidentiality and analyze data.

Data Collection

Collection of data occurred on three separate occasions, according to the research questions. The first collection was the SWB and the SAS scales at the start of camp. The second collection was of the SWB directly at the end of camp, and the final collection was eight weeks after camp and consisted of the SAS. The first two collections were to the students while at camp and yielded the highest participation rate.

Participants received the SAS eight weeks after the conclusion of camp. This final collection, which included mailed questionnaires, was sent to students with a self-addressed envelope. Electronic copies were also e-mailed to students upon request. Even with the various methods of correspondence, these final collections received the least amount of responses, which is a determining factor in itself. If a student failed to return the questionnaire within three weeks, another questionnaire was mailed to the participant.

The Questionnaires

The first questionnaire, the Spiritual Well-Being scale is well validated. Since its introduction in 1982 by Paloutzian and Ellison, the SWB has been used in more than three hundred studies (Hill and Hood 384). The SWB was originally designed as a general indicator of the subjective state of well-being of the spiritual quality of life (Paloutzian and Ellison 3). The SWB is composed of twenty items, ten of which assess religious well-being specifically and ten of which assess existential well-being. The SWB can be used for a variety of groups such as clinical practices, health care, congregational assessment, or to monitor the well-being among subgroups of a congregation, programs, or activities (3).

Through its frequent use, the SWB has “well-established convergent and discriminant validity, though it is subject to ceiling effects among conservative religious populations” (Paloutzian and Park 52). The ceiling effect, as often seen in Protestant groups and that results in generally high scores, was not seen in this population. The SWB, which serves as a good instrument to use with youth, shows those who participated in the CYMM were honest, without guile, and candid in their responses.

For the purpose of this study, the SWB scale is used in conjunction with the Spiritual Assessment Scale in order to measure spiritual well-being of students and the effectiveness and awareness of the spiritual disciplines in the lives of the participants.

As I searched for questionnaires to answer the research questions, I could not find one to measure the six selected Christian spiritual disciplines chosen for the model. Therefore, a researcher-designed questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study (see Appendix B).

The SAS was intended to measure the frequency by which each of the six habits are practiced. The questionnaire, which consists of thirty questions (five for each discipline), relies upon the youth's personal experience and subjectivity. It is similar to the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS), which was developed with funding by several large Protestant denominations as a way of gauging the degree to which individuals have well-developed faith. Likewise, the SAS was designed to measure "the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life transforming faith" (Hill and Hood 171). The SAS focused on behavioral development with the six spiritual disciplines and incorporation of these into one's life. The SAS did not intentionally measure "faith maturity," as does the FMS, yet it was concerned with spiritual growth patterns as they relate to developing habits with the spiritual disciplines.

The religiousness measure served as a resource for the development of the SAS as it helps determine the religious involvement by the use of three questions evaluated on a frequency scale (Hill and Hood 210). Responses to the religiousness measure were scored on a scale from 1 to 6 with the higher number implying greater involvement. The SAS utilized a similar scale but with a range from 1 to 5 in order to determine the truthfulness of a particular statement. This researcher-designed scale attempted to reflect the level of involvement of the six spiritual disciplines among youth in order to determine the effectiveness of the contemplative youth ministry curriculum model.

Each scale was administered in controlled conditions of both the pre- and post-surveys (same environment, timing, controlled setting, and in about the same amount of

time). Nevertheless, the follow-up surveys were much more difficult to control for conditions or to assess a general feel for the emotional or mental state of the youth.

Pretest of the Questionnaire

In May 2006, a pretest of the SAS questionnaire was given to twelve senior high youth from several Southwest Texas Conference churches. The questionnaires were returned the same day. The youth were asked about the layout, design, and language of the questionnaire. Some suggestions were made, which resulted in a final edition of the SAS.

Constants and Variables

The constant in this study is the involvement of all youth participants at a week church camp in the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church in Kerrville, Texas. An outline of the contemplative youth ministry curriculum is included in Appendix C. The variable measured is the effectiveness of a contemplative youth ministry model in order to increase awareness and the practice of the classic spiritual disciplines as a means to overall spiritual well-being. The results came from each participant who took part in the Way2Live Summer Camp, 23-27 July 2006.

In a similar dissertation by Rainwater, variables that could not be controlled were the prior knowledge among youth of the spiritual disciplines, the quality and participation of the summer camp small group, the level of engagement in the spiritual practices of the youth, and the environment to which the youth returns (Rainwater 60).

Collection of the Data

The administration of the SWB (three times) and the SAS (twice) made up the data for the survey. This data was collected, analyzed, and recorded in order to measure

the overall sense of spiritual well-being and to develop attentiveness to God through the practice of the spiritual disciplines.

Prior to the start of camp, a letter was sent to the parent or guardian (see Appendix C) of each registered youth explaining the nature of the study and requesting parental consent for youth to participate. A detailed explanation of the study was provided as was a parent or guardian consent form and a student consent form (see Appendix C).

The pretest SWB and SAS surveys were administered to each camper at the beginning of camp and collected on-site. The campers identified the survey by using the first four digits of their birth dates. Surveys were grouped by camp in order to avoid overlap of birth dates yet not by gender, which suggests a limitation in the study. Those campers sharing the same birth date while attending the same camp were differentiated by adding a letter after their birth date. A total of 204 SWB pretest and posttest and SAS pre-completed surveys were collected.

The posttest SWB was given at the end of camp and collected on-site. These SWB post-surveys were collected and the data recorded. Eight weeks after camp, on 15 September 2006, a letter (see Appendix D) was mailed to the camper with the follow-up SWB and SAS surveys along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Any camper who did not respond twelve weeks after the end of camp was mailed an additional postcard asking them to respond with the completed surveys.

Data Analysis

The primary statistical procedures employed in analyzing the data gathered in the pre-, post-, and follow-up questionnaires were t-tests and Chi-Square testing. The level of

spiritual well-being and practice of the spiritual disciplines was analyzed by comparing a total of five pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys completed by the participants.

Summary

Chapter 3 describes the process and methods used to answer the research questions. The questionnaires used reflected a well-proven scale and a researcher-designed scale given twice to each participant. These questionnaires dealt with youth perceptions of their own spiritual well-being, and their continuing practice of the six spiritual disciplines. These questionnaires were given on-site before and after the camp and also mailed to participants eight weeks after the end of camp.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study by answering the three research questions first outlined in Chapter 1.

The Description of the Population Surveyed

Two hundred and four campers attended the Way2Live Summer Camps sponsored by the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church during the summer of 2006. The summer consisted of four camps conducted at two different locations, Mount Wesley Retreat and Conference Center in Kerrville, Texas, and the H. E. Butt Foundation Camp near Leakey, Texas.

The surveys were not differentiated by gender which suggests a limitation of the study. Gender division at the Southwest Texas Conference youth camps suggests 60 percent attendance by female and 40 percent by male. Data analysis by gender could potentially show important trends, behaviors and maturation patterns, which would be beneficial to this study. A higher participation by females could suggest higher levels of commitment and devotion to spirituality than among males. Future studies would do well to separate data by gender.

Out of the 204 campers, forty (19 percent) returned all five of the requested surveys completed correctly. In several cases, the respondents did not completely fill out the surveys or did not include the identification number, which resulted in having to discard dozens of surveys. In order to increase validation and reliability of the scores, forty additional SWB pre- and post-surveys were selected among those who did not

complete the follow-up SWB or SAS. These scores were added to the study and the findings suggested the original SWB sample is statistically equal to the random sample of forty additional surveys.

Reporting the Data Related to Question 1

Research Question 1 asks, “What is the spiritual well-being of youth at the beginning of camp, and to what extent are youth presently engaged in the six Christian spiritual disciplines?”

Figure 4.1 shows the SWB pre-survey average for each individual camper with a range from 3.5 (camper 21) to 6.0 (camper 38). The average consisted of twenty questions on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6. The SWB pre-survey average was 4.8. Included within this analysis were eleven questions that were negatively worded, meaning, a lower number indicated a stronger spiritual score. These eleven questions had to be transposed so they would be consistent with the positively worded questions. In comparison, the average United Methodist Congregational score for the SWB is 4.96 (Paloutzian and Ellison 5).

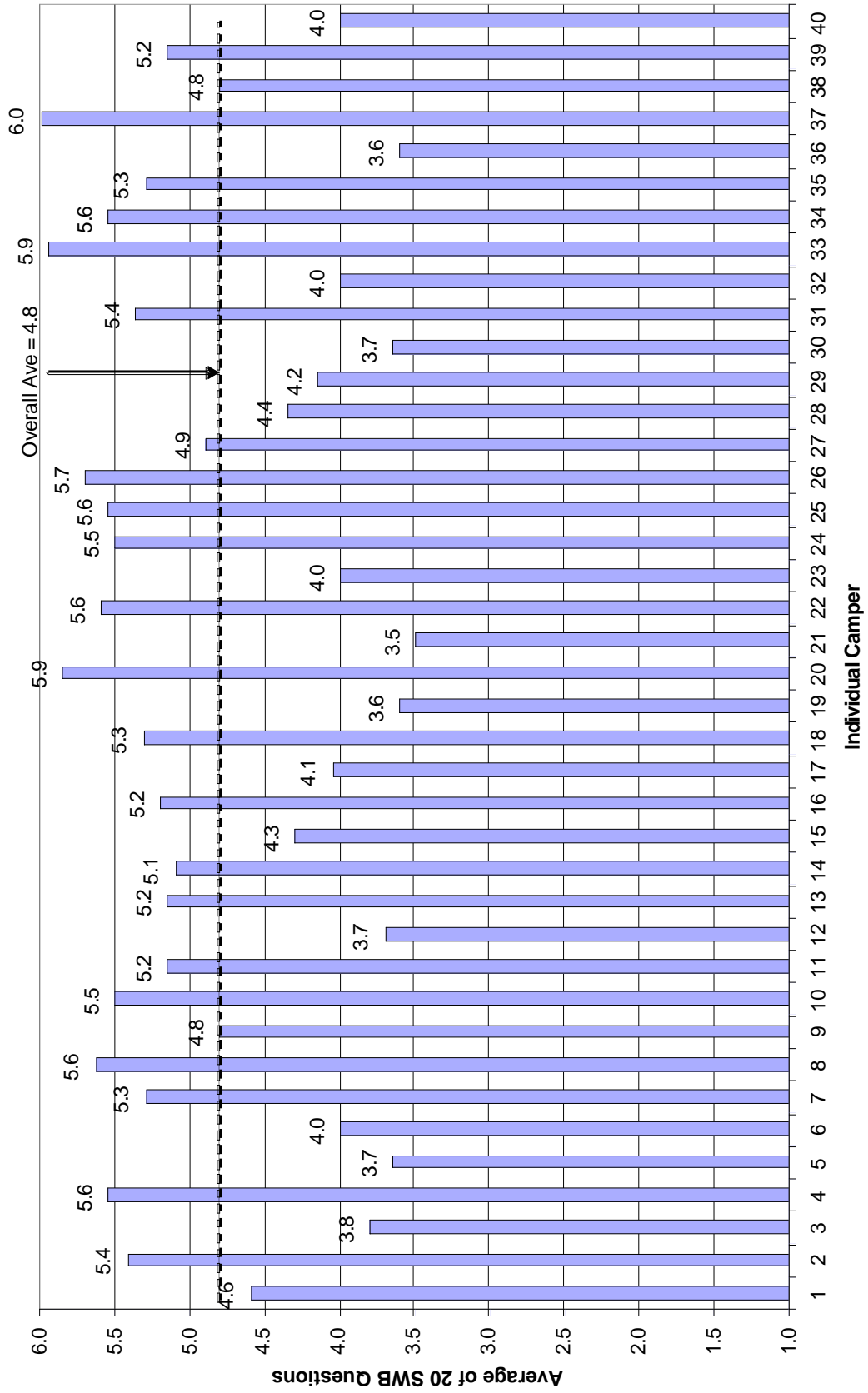


Figure 4.1. SWB survey results per camper.

Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of average scores of campers before camp. Over half the campers scored a 5.0 or higher, indicating a relatively strong spiritual well-being at the beginning of camp. However, having eleven campers at the 3.5 to 4.0 level distribution is relatively significant and shows the pre-camp survey is not skewed to the high ends scores of the scale.

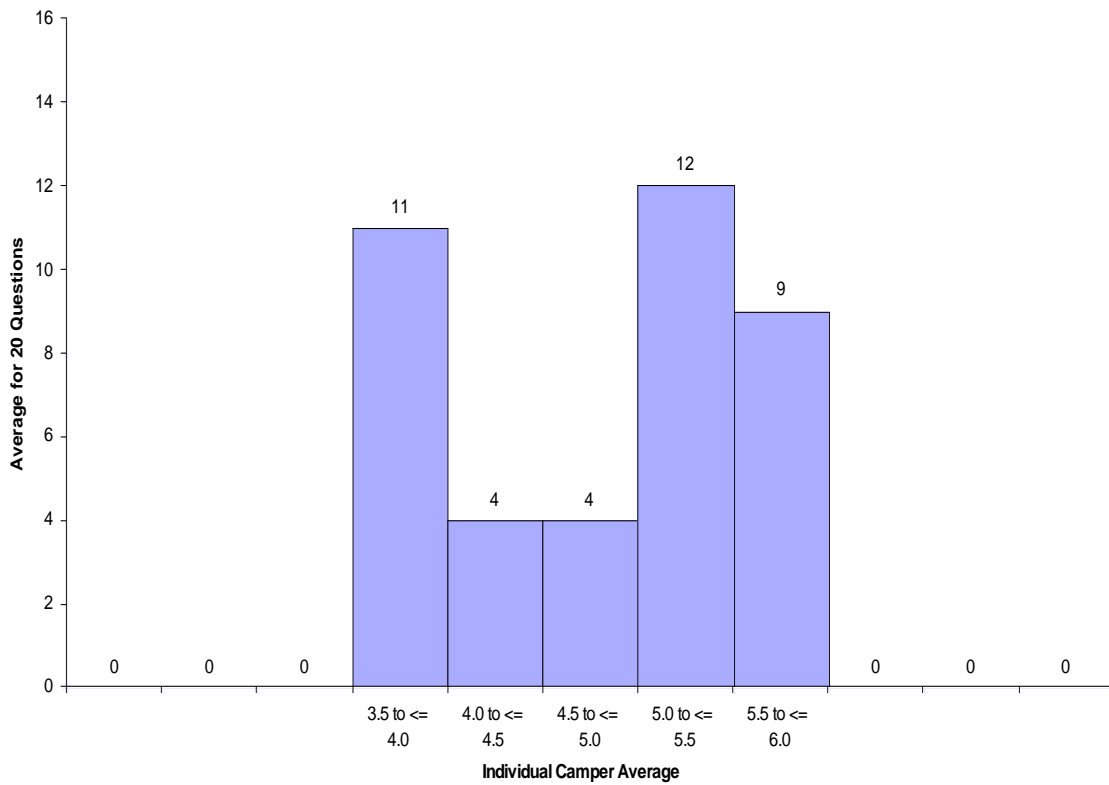


Figure 4.2. Histogram of pre-camp SWB average by camper.

Figure 4.3 shows the pre-camp averages of the Religious Well-Being (RWB) and the Existential Well-Being (EWB) subgroups of the SWB. Because the SWB is a general indicator of perceived well-being, the RWB subscale provides a self-assessment of one’s well-being in a religious sense. The EWB subscale gives a self-assessment of one’s sense

of life purpose and life satisfaction (Paloutzian and Ellison 2). The RWB and EWB scores are relatively the same at the beginning of camp, thus indicating a good balance between the students' religious side and satisfaction with life.

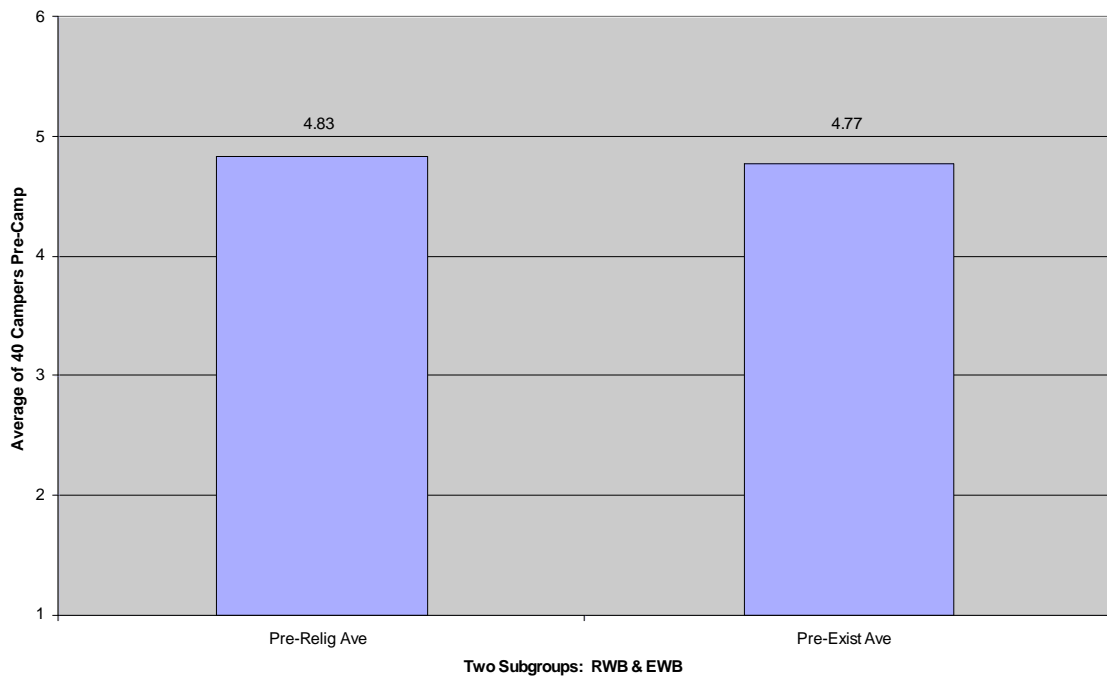


Figure 4.3. SWB subgroup averages in pre-camp surveys.

Figure 4.4 represents the Spiritual Assessment Scale for the six spiritual disciplines before camp. The average for each discipline consisted of five questions on the subject ranging from 1 to 5 on the Likert Scale. One reversely worded question (question 27) in the SAS was transposed so the scores would be consistent with the positively worded questions. Among these disciplines, worship and celebration were the highest at 3.6. Fasting was the lowest with an average score of 2.0.

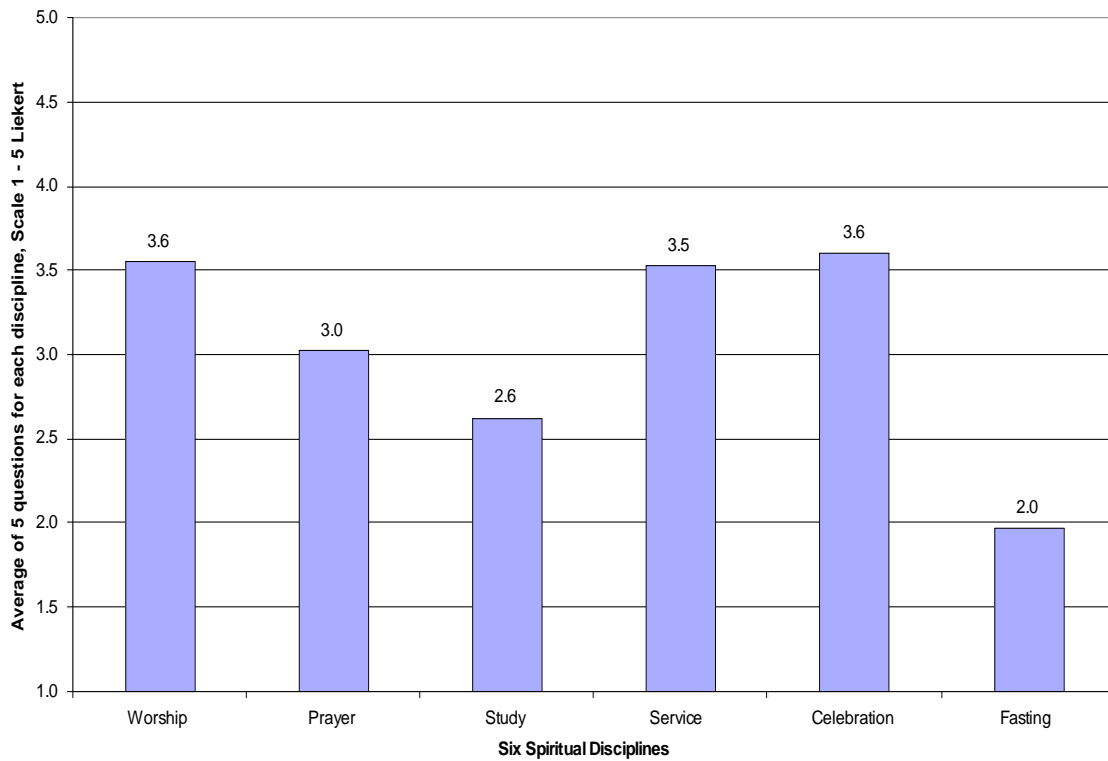


Figure 4.4. SAS summary of six spiritual disciplines pre-camp.

Figure 4.5 shows the median scores and the range of scores of the SAS pre-camp average for the six spiritual disciplines. Each box indicates 50 percent of the population and the size of the box indicates the amount of variation in the score results. The “X” above and below the box represent the highest and lowest score respectively and the median score is displayed inside the box. Three of the six disciplines ranged from 1 to 5 on the scale. Service and celebration had consistently higher minimum scores than the other disciplines. The most variation in pre-camp survey results was seen with the disciplines of worship and prayer. Celebration had the most consistent results of the six disciplines, which is probably expected as most students can easily identify with this

discipline. Fasting had by far the lowest median of the six disciplines indicating that it is the least practiced discipline.

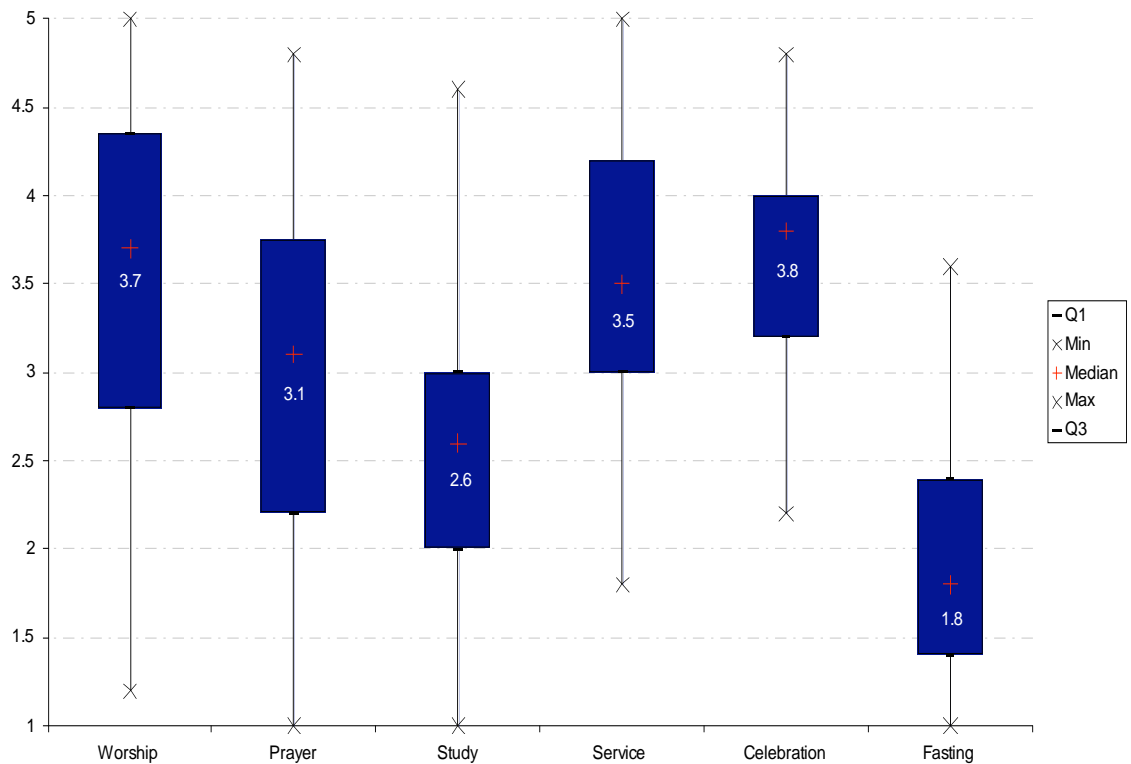


Figure 4.5. SAS pre-camp average for six spiritual disciplines.

Reporting the Data Related to Question 2

Research Question 2 asks, “What is the level of spiritual well-being among youth at the end of camp upon completion of the contemplative youth ministry model?”

Figure 4.6. SAS average for camper post-survey.

Figure 4.6 represents the SWB average for campers for the post-survey. The scores ranged from 3.4 (camper 30) to 6.0 (camper 33) with the overall post-survey average at 5.1, which is up from the pre-survey average of 4.8. Once again, comparing

these post-survey results to the average of the United Methodist Congregational score of 4.96, the post-survey SWB results is now above the average (Paloutzian and Ellison 5).

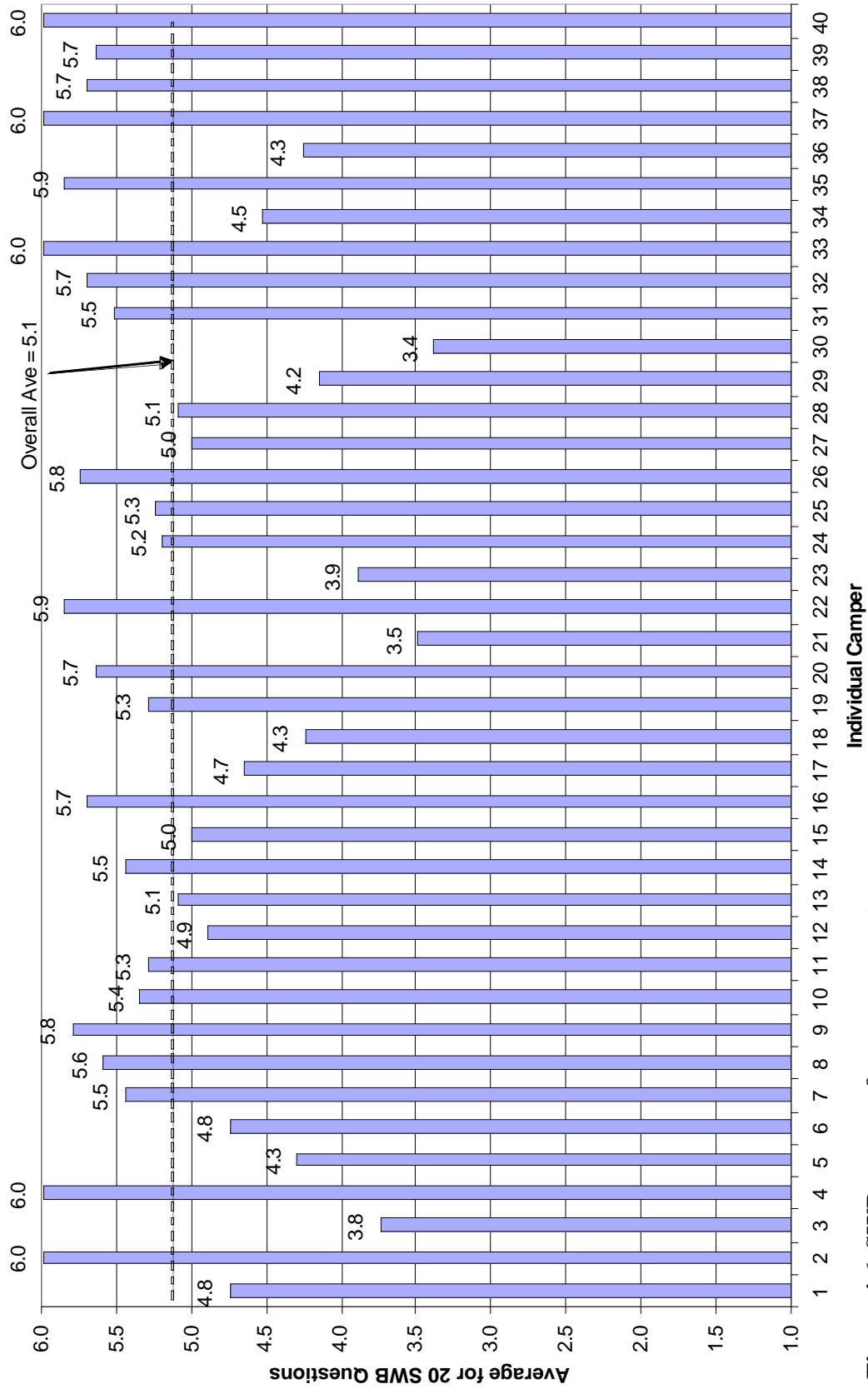


Figure 4.6. SWB average for camper post-

Table 4.1 provides an overall summary of the SWB pre, post and follow-up survey, average in standard deviations. The SWB average did improve from 4.80 to 5.14 at the end of camp. The post and follow-up surveys are very similar in average and standard deviation.

Table 4.1. SWB Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up Surveys by Average and Standard Deviation

Timing of Survey	SWB Average	SWB SD
Pre-survey	4.80	1.38
Post-survey	5.14	1.18
Follow-up survey	5.16	1.13

Figure 4.7 indicates the distribution of average scores of campers at the end of camp, which shows a distinct difference in the distribution between the post-and pre-camp surveys. The post-camp survey is now clearly skewed to the high-end scores, and the impact of camp on the spiritual well-being of the students is evidenced in the distribution. The mean increased by 10 percent in the post-survey. Eleven students scored below 4.0 in the pre-survey compared to four students in the post-survey. Twenty-five of the forty students surveyed score higher than 5.0, four more than in the pre-survey.

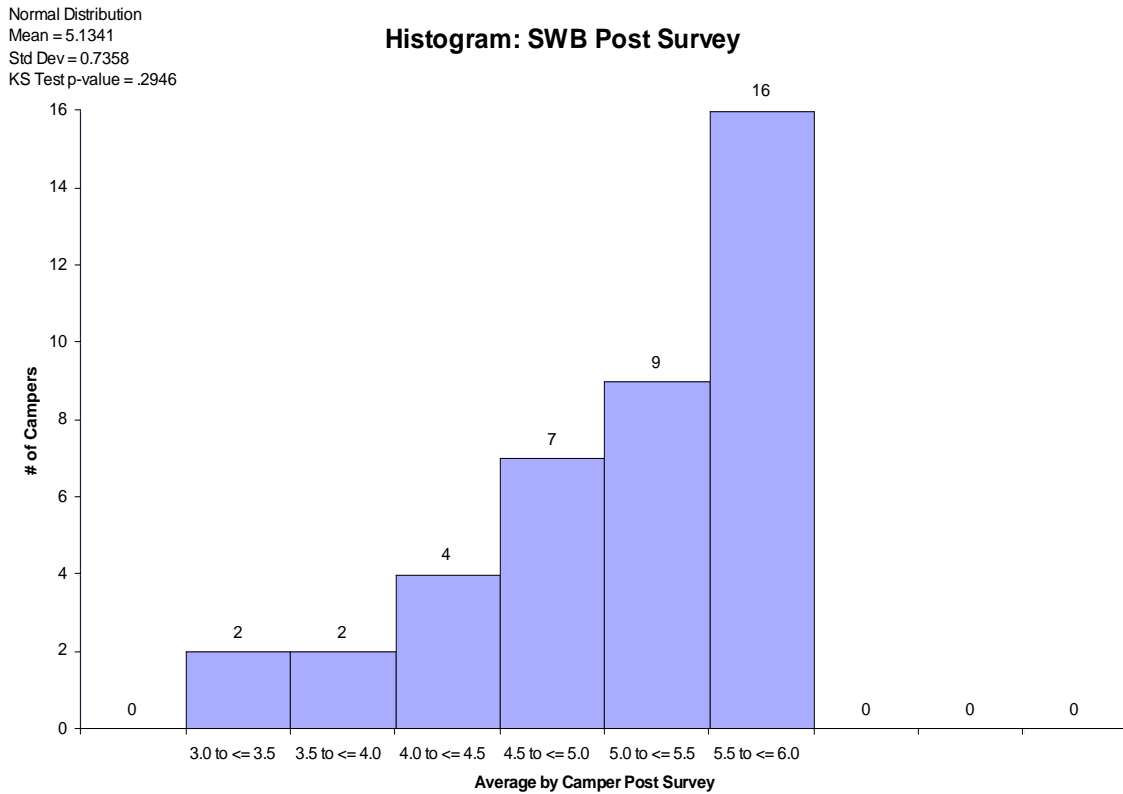


Figure 4.7. Histogram SWB post-survey.

The impact on the spiritual well-being as a result of the contemplative youth ministry model can easily be seen in Figure 4.8. This side-by-side comparison indicates the shift in the campers' sense of spiritual well-being from the pre- versus post-surveys.

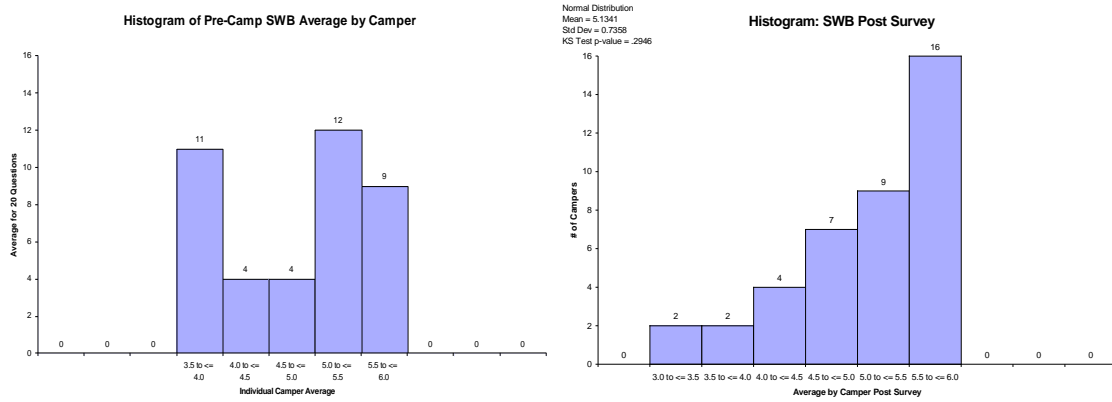


Figure 4.8. Comparison of histogram of pre-and post-camp SWB average by camper.

Table 4.2 shows a random sample of forty pre- and post- SWB surveys taken from the 204 survey results that did not have a complete set of five. The random sample was compared to the original sample of surveys used as the basis of the data seen in this dissertation. The pre-survey results for all twenty questions were compared between the original data and the random sample data. The t-test results confirm that the two samples are statistically the same. The post-survey results also established the t-test two samples as equal. Given this result, the sample of forty surveys presented in this study is considered a valid sample of the 204 students that attended camp.

Table 4.2. SWB Comparison of Pre- and Post-Camp Average, Original vs. Resample

Timing of Survey	t-test p-value	Conclusion
Pre-camp Original vs. resample	0.148	No difference
Post-camp Original vs. resample	5.23	No difference

Figure 4.9 shows the SWB subsets of RWB and EWB for the pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys. As the figure indicates, both subsets increased by students attending camp. The RWB changed by 8.3 percent and the EWB changed by 6.1 percent from pre- to post-camp surveys.

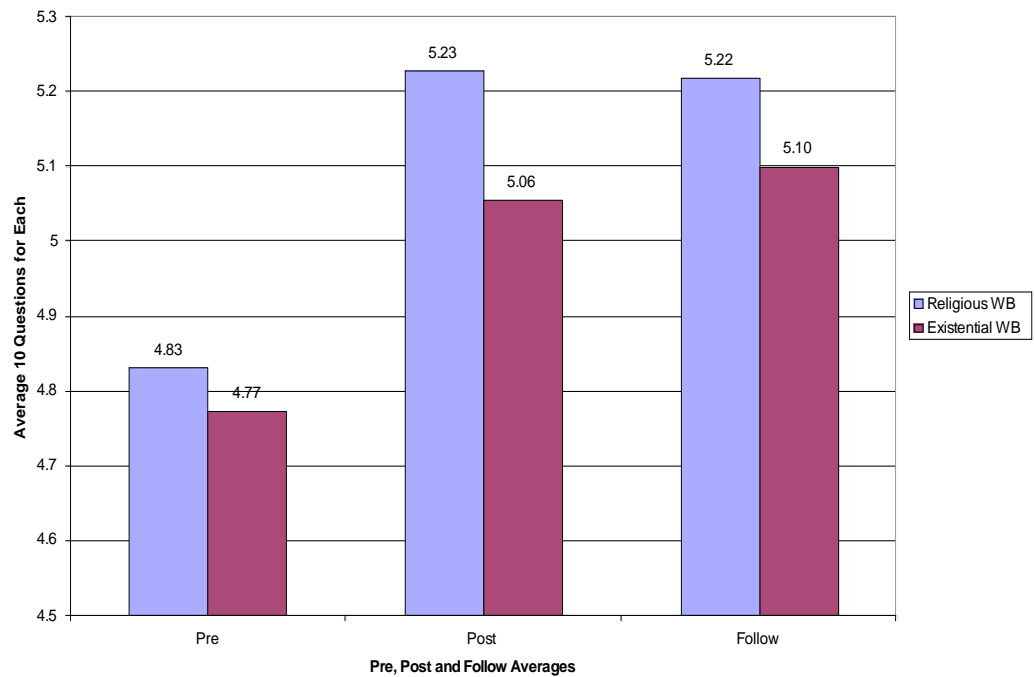


Figure 4.9. SWB subset of RWB and EWB pre-, post- and follow-up.

Table 4.3 is a summary of the SWB subset comparison to the average United Methodist adult congregation. All pre-camp scores are below the United Methodist adult average and all post- and follow-up scores are above the United Methodist adult average

Table 4.3. SWB Subset Comparison to the Average United Methodist Congregation

Timing of Survey	RWB	EWB	SWB
Pre-camp	4.83	4.77	4.8
Post-camp	5.23	5.06	5.1
Follow-up	5.22	5.10	5.2
United Methodist Adults*	4.96	4.95	4.96

* Paloutzian and Ellison 5.

Table 4.4 indicates a summary of t-tests for SWB subsets of RWB and EWB. The religious well-being subset shows a statistically significant difference at the $p \leq 0.05$ level between the pre-survey scores and the post- and follow-up survey scores.

In summary, the RWB subset of the SWB survey was statistically impacted by the contemplative youth ministry model. While the increase in the EWB was not found to be statistically significant, the average of the EWB did increase by over 6%. The RWB well-being of the students was affected.

Table 4.4. SWB Subset Statistical Analysis between Pre-, Post- and Follow-up

Surveys

SWB Subset	t-test p-value
Religious well-being: pre- vs. post-	*0.044
Religious well-being: pre- vs. follow-up	*0.033
Existential well-being: pre- vs. post-	0.135
Existential well-being: pre- vs. follow-up	0.084

* Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Table 4.5 results show a statistically significant difference in the overall SWB survey results between pre- and post- as well as between pre- and follow-up surveys. No statistically significant difference is present between the post- and follow-up surveys indicating the impact extended eight weeks after camp.

Table 4.5. SWB Statistical Comparison Table Overall and by Question

SWB Comparison	t-test p-value
Pre- vs. post-	* 0.0086
Pre- vs. follow-up	* 0.0179
Post- vs. follow-up	0.943

* Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Reporting the Data Related to Question 3

Research Question 3 asks, “To what extent are youth involved in the practice of the six Christian spiritual disciplines eight weeks after leaving camp?”

Figure 4.10 represents the SAS for the six spiritual disciplines after camp. Worship scored the highest at 3.9 with fasting the lowest at 2.5. Nevertheless, fasting showed a .5 increase in the average from the pre-camp survey.

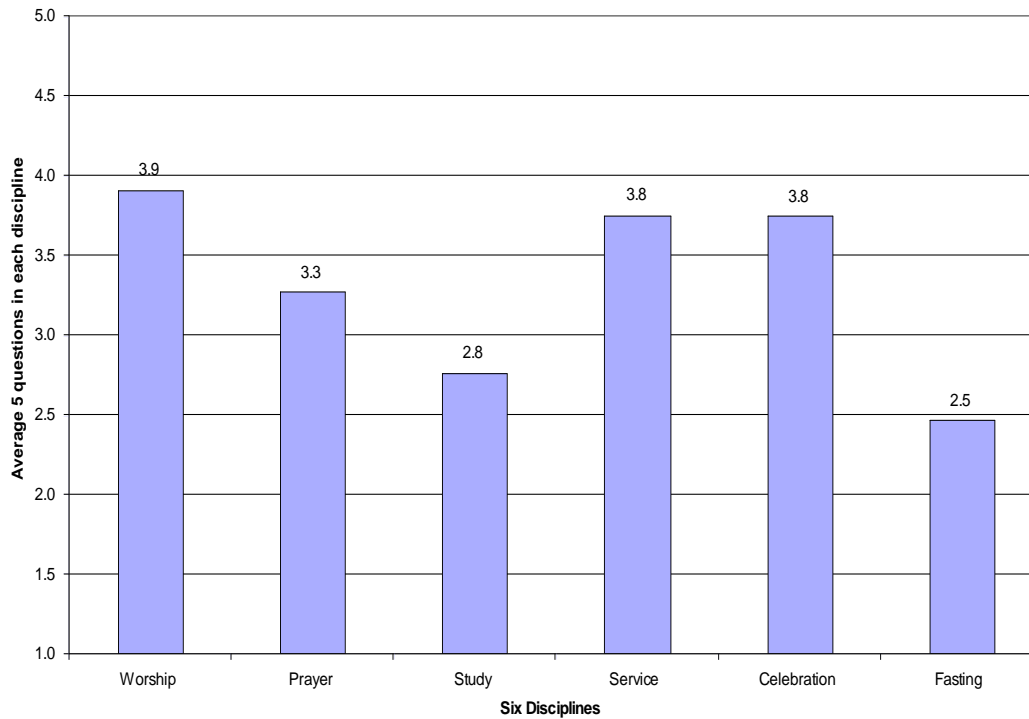


Figure 4.10. SAS six spiritual disciplines average on follow-up survey.

Figure 4.11 shows the SAS six spiritual disciplines pre- and follow-up averages and the range and distribution of each. The 50 percentile group moved up considerably for worship and fasting. Each discipline showed an increase in the median with the exception of celebration, which decreased in variation resulting in a more consistent understanding of celebration after camp.

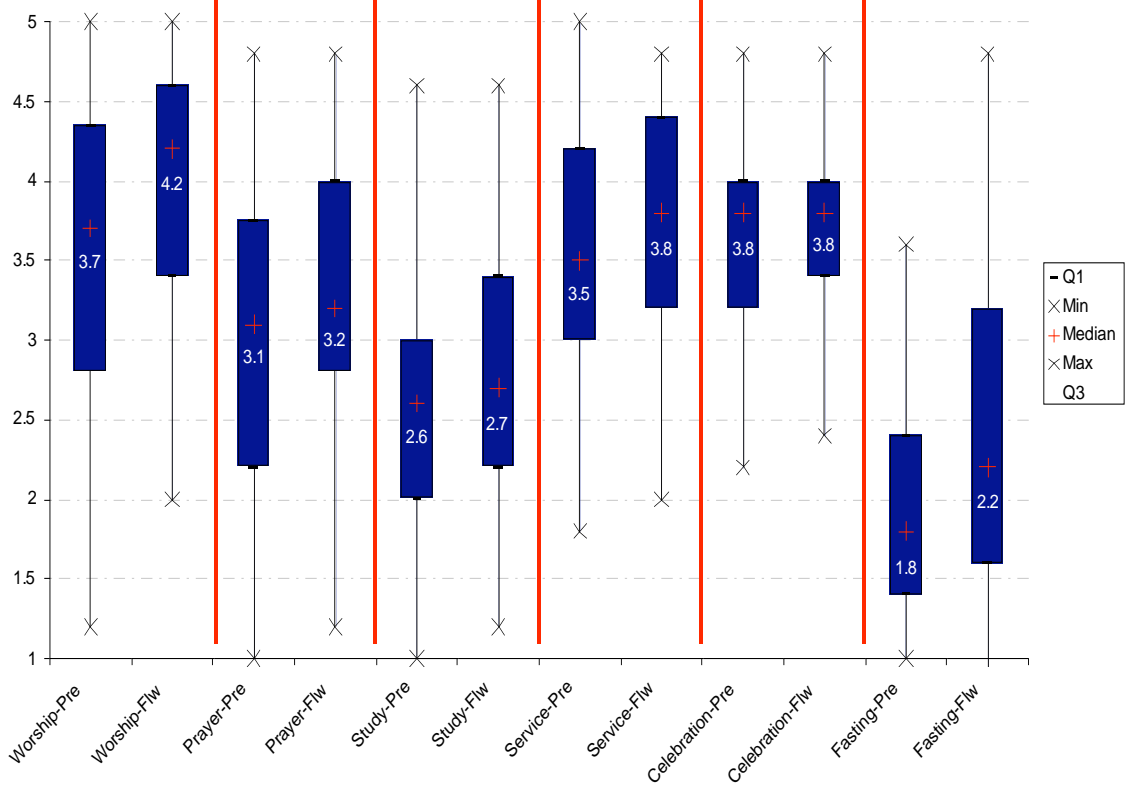


Figure 4.11. SAS six spiritual disciplines pre- and follow-up box plot averages.

Table 4.6 summarizes the pre- versus follow-up surveys for the six spiritual disciplines showing the average and standard deviation for each. The average for each discipline did show an improvement as a result from camp while the standard deviation stayed about the same for the post-survey results.

Table 4.6. SAS Follow-Up Camp Average Standard Deviation

Discipline	Pre- Average	Pre- SD	Follow-Up Average	Follow-Up SD
Worship	3.6	1.4	3.9	1.3
Prayer	3.0	1.4	3.3	1.4
Study	2.6	1.5	2.8	1.5
Service	3.5	1.3	3.8	1.2
Celebration	3.6	1.5	3.8	1.4
Fasting	2.0	1.4	2.5	1.5

Each of the spiritual disciplines did experience an increase in the average score from the pre-camp to the follow-up camp survey. From a statistical perspective, only one of the disciplines, fasting, saw a statistically significant change at a 0.05 level.

Table 4.7. SAS Statistical Comparisons for Pre- versus Follow-Up by Six Disciplines

Spiritual Discipline	t-test
Worship: pre- vs. follow-up	0.0951
Prayer: pre- vs. follow-up	0.2825
Study: pre- vs. follow-up	0.3714
Service: pre- vs. follow-up	0.1497
Celebration: pre- vs. follow	0.0990
Fasting: pre- vs. follow-up	*0.0018

* Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Summary of Major Findings

The study had some significant findings:

1. The results of the SWB scale suggest a spiritual impact in the lives of the students who participated in the study. The surveys showed a significantly statistical increase in the overall SWB results between pre- and post- survey data. Similar results were seen between the pre- and follow-up surveys. In addition, no significant change was

seen between the post- and follow-up surveys eight weeks after camp, which suggests the positive, sustainable impact of the CYMM.

2. The subsets of the SWB (RWB and EWB) also showed a statistically significant impact. The RWB subset, which provides a self-assessment of one's well-being in a religious sense, showed a statistically significant difference at the $p \leq 0.05$ level between the pre-survey scores and the post- and follow-up survey scores. These findings suggest the impact of religious over existential, which is in keeping with the purpose of the CYMM and the target of the project.

3. The six spiritual disciplines and the SAS were critical parts of the analysis. Each saw a desirable increase yet the most significant improvement was seen in the discipline of fasting with a statistical difference at the $p \leq 0.05$ level.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The limited purpose with which this study began was to develop and evaluate a contemplative youth ministry curriculum model (CYMM) in a retreat setting. This study sought to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth by teaching six selected classic spiritual disciplines. This study developed a summer camp model by which the disciplines were taught as well as a measure to gauge the continued practice of these disciplines after the camping experience.

The study showed the significance of the contemplative youth ministry curriculum, as a means to spiritual growth, in the number of youth who continued the practice of the disciplines eight weeks after the conclusion of camp.

Evaluation and Interpretation of Data

Answers to the three research questions point to the following data results.

Increase in Spiritual Well-Being

The data shows youth who completed the five surveys showed a statistically significant increase in their overall spiritual well-being and religious well-being scales. The spiritual well-being results (all twenty questions) concluded the pre-surveys and the post- and follow-up surveys were significantly different and showed an improvement in the spiritual well-being of the youth. The RWB indicated a stronger impact upon the lives of students than the EWB which suggests the religious and spiritual impact of the CYMM.

The SWB pre- versus post-statistical comparison overall has a p-value of 0.0086, indicating a statistically significant difference. The pre-survey versus follow-up survey

also reveals an increase with a p-value of 0.0179. The SWB comparison for post- versus follow-up survey showed no statistical difference with a p-value of 0.943.

Additionally, the fact that the post and the follow-up survey results were statistically equal (p-value = 0.943) shows that the SWB of the youth extended eight weeks beyond camp. The contemplative youth ministry model implemented during the week maintained a desirable result in the spiritual lives of youth.

This data leads to the conclusion that the greatest significant impact of the SWB occurred in the pre- versus post-survey, which suggests that with time, the conclusion of the camp and the practice of the spiritual disciplines during the week resulted in an overall increase in spiritual-well being. The lack of difference between the post- versus follow-up results suggests that although the greatest impact was obtained at the end of camp, a high level of SWB was maintained at least eight weeks after the conclusion of camp.

Increase in the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

The data presented in Chapter 4 shows an increase in the overall practice of the spiritual disciplines by youth who attended the camp marking a statistically significant increase among fasting ($p \leq 0.05$). Each of the spiritual disciplines did experience an increase in the average score from the pre-camp survey to the follow-up camp survey. From a statistical perspective, only fasting saw a statistically significant change at a 0.05 level.

This data leads me to conclude exposure to the six spiritual disciplines not only opens up new avenues to grow in depth of discipleship but also affirms existing

disciplines. By diving deeper into these practices of the faith we give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to “brood over our souls” (Calhoun 19).

The significant increase in fasting, from an average pre-camp score of a 2.0 to an average post-camp score of a 2.5 suggests United Methodist youth do not give a high value of practice to this discipline until encouraged to do so. The concept of fasting is counter-cultural to today’s self-indulgent society. Calhoun suggests avoidance of fasting “shows us just how little taste we actually have for sacrifice or time with God” (220) yet when presented with an opportunity for self-denial, the study shows youth will respond in a positive way. The significant increase in the CYMM implies the students’ heightened awareness resulted in an increase in this particular discipline.

This increase helps fulfill the purpose of the CYMM in its attempt to improve awareness of the spiritual disciplines among youth attending camp. While not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, considerable improvements were seen in celebration and worship, which rose from an average pre-camp score of 3.6 to an average post-camp score of 3.8.

One possible reason for the increase in the practice of worship might be the exposure to new types of worship while at summer camp. The high level of those leading, a youth-gearred speaker and a professional band, as well as participation by youth might contribute to the additional interest in the practice of worship upon leaving camp. A majority of the camp was designed around a style of worship that called participants to engage God with their “whole being, ... [laying] the body, mind, spirit, and emotions on the altar “ (Foster 147). The data, which shows worship did increase as a result of the camp,

Additionally, the data shows prayer, study, and service did not show a significant difference, yet each experienced an increase in average scores. Prayer moved from an average pre-camp score of 3.0 to an average post-camp score of 3.3, study from 2.6 to 2.8, and service from 3.5 to 3.8. Study was the second lowest practiced discipline at 2.8, just above the 2.5 of fasting. Service was the second highest practice discipline just 0.1 point below worship at 3.8 and tied with celebration.

This project, which focused upon developing and evaluating CYMM aimed at creating a spiritual awareness of Christ, proved to be effective. Youth who participated in camp increased their overall sense of spiritual well-being as well as their practice of the six spiritual disciplines.

Conclusions Related to the Statement of the Purpose

Looking at the evaluation of data and the conclusions, the SWB and SAS did have a significantly significant impact on youth who attended summer camp.

A Christian leader interested in replicating this model effectively should note the contemplative youth ministry model as a whole requires a purpose-based curriculum, a Christ-centered theme, a multisensory worship experience, and a faith-based discipleship plan as important elements for effectiveness. These four areas will now be addressed as essential conclusive elements.

Developing a Purpose-Based Curriculum

Retreats are purpose-based opportunities for students to reconnect to God and to help youth find their purpose. “Retreats impact lives because they’re opportunities to get students away from all of the competing influences in their lives and to help them focus

on God, fellowship, and personal growth” (Go Deeper Retreats 5). Fields suggests that since any program in youth ministry is intended to influence students, a leader will design programs “to best reflect the ministry’s purpose” (Purpose Driven Youth Ministry 79). Creating a retreat strategy for the purpose of helping youth grow in their relationship to God by focusing on the classic spiritual disciplines is the goal of the contemplative youth ministry model (CYMM). Leaders who desire to reach youth through retreat and camping ministries will design programs based on a specific purpose and definite plan.

Retaining a Christ-Centered Theme

Too often denominational youth camps without a strong biblical purpose or spirit-filled emphasis move away from a Christ-centered theme to a focus solely upon having fun or creating fellowship. The CYMM gave attention to developing and evaluating a youth ministry curriculum model aimed at creating a spiritual awareness of Christ. The goal of the retreat is to center on Christ and not simply on developing fellowship, even though fellowship, for example, is one of the six disciplines. The central purpose of the model, as stated in 1 Corinthians 1:23, is to “preach Christ crucified.” The emphasis remains upon the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The practices throughout the week are designed to deepen discipleship and increase spiritual awareness of Christ. The CYMM utilizes active contemplation, energizing worship, and meaningful activities to direct youth towards a vital and sustaining relationship with Jesus Christ.

Maintaining a Christ-centered theme while teaching the spiritual disciplines is what Steve Harper refers to as “the life of God in the human soul” (qtd. in Spiritual Disciplines 101 15). When the spiritual disciplines, or the “means of grace” as Harper refers to them, are emphasized, Christians are “holier, healthier, happier and better

connected to the rest of the Body of Christ” (22). Integration of the spiritual disciplines enables but does not always ensure a close connection to Christ Jesus.

Integrating Multisensory Worship

One important aspect of the CYMM is the addition of multisensory worship at every worship service. Some consider this type of experience postmodern while others label it as emergent worship. The idea is to take worship elements such as prayer, singing, Scripture reading, confession, and repentance, which have been foundational within the Christian tradition, and reshape it for application among youth today using modern methods.¹

According to Michael Slaughter, pastor of Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, making use of multimedia and technology in worship is essential. Slaughter writes that the “electronic media is to the ‘Reformation’ of the twenty-first century what Gutenberg’s press was to the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (25). Because many Christians agree with John S. Miller et al. who write, “Worship is the single most important thing in life,” multisensory worship can lead persons to an authentic Christ-centered, spirit-filled experience (155).

Encouraging Faith-Based Discipleship

The data shows an increase in participation of the classic spiritual disciplines by youth eight weeks after camp, but more significant was the increase in the spiritual well-being scale in the students’ awareness of Christ. This increase suggests the overall retreat experience resulted in effective spiritual self-awareness. Nevertheless, in order to

¹ This aspect of worship has ballooned to a point where one can purchase clothing at www.multisensoryworship.com and get all the necessary “gear” for a multisensory worship experience.

maintain this level of commitment and spiritual well-being, faith-based discipleship is encouraged.

Faith-based discipleship involves teaching students how to maintain a high level of spiritual well-being and learn how to walk with Christ daily. Camps and retreats are intended to help “jump start” one’s faith, but continued discipleship, teaching, instruction, and mentoring in the local church or youth group is necessary for long-term development. Leaders wishing to increase spiritual awareness among youth might plan follow-up retreats or gatherings in churches that reinforce and reaffirm the students’ experience at summer camp.

While the spiritual disciplines help open lives to God, the retreat experience as a whole depends upon assimilating a purpose-based curriculum, a Christ-centered theme, a multisensory worship experience, and a faith-based discipleship (Calhoun 19).

Limitations of the Study

Three factors limit the ability to apply this study broadly. First, this study surveyed youth from camps in the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, which is limited in demographic, ethnic, and economic representation. Almost all of the participants were upper middle-class Caucasians.

Second, the difference in theology would limit application. Not every camp, denomination, or religion would agree with the evangelical, conservative or Wesleyan nature of the curriculum. Theology and religious views vary from camp to camp, and those wanting to duplicate this curriculum would need to take their ministry context and culture into consideration.

Third, the number of respondents limits the study. Although 204 youth attended camp, only forty returned all five surveys. A larger number of campers, with more ethnic and social representation would have improved the study. Qualitative research, such as interview questions or fill-in-the-blanks, could have been added and would have helped to broaden the level of spiritual impact and helped explain the level of attentiveness to God.

Getting qualitative feedback from participants during the follow-up surveys could have significantly provided additional research and insight, which might have aided in improving upon future application of the CYMM. Putting the post-survey's online might have also increased the follow-up by students participating in the study.

Unexpected Observations

The CYMM itself proved to be more labor intensive than first expected. The cost and quantity of surveys and supplies for growth groups and worship services was significantly more than anticipated and resulted in additional cost and hours of set up. Those wishing to replicate such a model must take cost, set-up, and preparation into consideration and have both a budget to support such an endeavor as well as the human resources to staff it.

Suggestions for Improving the Study and Future Research

Teaching the spiritual disciplines to youth in a retreat setting is only one means to increasing spiritual awareness. The spiritual disciplines serve as a way to continued growth as Christians, yet other discipleship opportunities are available to help youth grow in their faith journeys with Christ. Exploring other avenues to discipleship would be a worthwhile endeavor and contribute to this study as a whole.

Application beyond This Project

This study sought to increase spiritual awareness and depth of discipleship among youth attending camp; however, this study might also be applied to the local youth group wanting to teach the spiritual disciplines to youth yet not necessarily in a retreat setting. The CYMM might also be applied and adapted to a local church setting. Segments of the curriculum (see Appendix E) might be used among those entering confirmation, youth attending Sunday school, or a typical youth fellowship gathering during the week. The worship services listed might be adapted to a contemporary church worship service or conducted on a youth Sunday. Finally, adults attending the summer camps expressed a personal benefit from their experiences with the CYMM. Adults and youth alike can find focus and increased spiritual awareness by practicing the spiritual disciplines within or away from a retreat.

A Final Word

The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate a contemplative youth ministry curriculum model. This study was conducted in a retreat setting with youth through deepening Christian discipleship and increasing spiritual well-being by teaching six selected classic spiritual disciplines. The results showed the effectiveness of a focused camp and retreat ministry as a means to escape from the pressures of the world and center on one's relationship with Jesus Christ. The CYMM is intended to be one model by which youth can grow in their relationship with Christ through an intentional practice of six spiritual disciplines.

Jesus says in Luke 9:11 that when the crowds learned where he was they again came to him and "he welcomed them and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and

healed those who needed healing.” The six spiritual disciplines, when applied to one’s life, is intended to help emulate the example of Christ as a welcoming, evangelistic, and mission-minded servants. This project was intended to help youth grow into the example of Christ by becoming his hands and feet in a world in need of renewal and spiritual regeneration.

Yaconelli says, “Contemplative youth ministry isn’t just another ministry model; it’s an opening of the heart, an attentiveness to God, a receptivity to the Holy Spirit, a growing relationship with Jesus and his way of compassion” (Contemplative Youth Ministry 24). The contemplative youth ministry retreat model is a means by which youth can grow in Christ and experience life change along the way.

APPENDIX A

Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS)

Identification number: ___ ___ ___

Please put the number of the month and the day you were born as your identification number.

For example: February 15 = 0 2 1 5, July 3 = 0 7 0 3, November 14 = 1 1 1 4.

Use the same identification number for all the surveys.

Please respond to the following statements, circle the number that best represents your personal experience. Circle:

- 1 if the statement is not true of you at all;
- 2 if the statement is slightly true of you;
- 3 if the statement is moderately true of you;
- 4 if the statement is substantially true of you, and
- 5 if the statement is very true of you.

1. I attend church at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I talk to God every day.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I read usually my Bible every day.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I help others as much as I can.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I usually have a smile on my face.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have missed meals to spend time with God.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I often sing praises to God when alone.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Prayer is a regular part of my life.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I spend time in devotional books that help me grow.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I attend mission or service projects.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I spend a lot of time on the Internet with friends.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I frequently go without food for spiritual reasons.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I assist with a worship service on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I frequently journal or write prayers to God.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I take time to memorize Scripture.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I volunteer at church or youth group on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I frequently write notes of encouragement to others.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I skip TV, the Internet, or music for spiritual reasons.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I give thanks to God daily for what he's done for me.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I sometimes pray with friends when they are in need.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I share with others what God is teaching me.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I try to help out around the house as an act of service.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I like to celebrate life and have fun.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I normally give up something for Lent.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I have a growing love and desire for worship.	1	2	3	4	5
26. When I have a problem I talk to God about it first.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am not sure where my Bible is at the moment.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I like to serve God and find it rewarding in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I go to youth group activities or church parties.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I spend some meals praying rather than eating.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB)

Identification number: _ _ _ _

Please put the number of the month and the day you were born as your identification number.
For example: February 15 = 0215, July 3 = 0703, November 14 = 1114.
Use the same identification number for all the surveys.

For each of the following statements, circle the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience.

	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
1. I don't find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.						
2. I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I am going.						
3. I believe that God loves me and cares about me.						
4. I feel that life is a positive experience.						
5. I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situation.						
6. I feel unsettled about my future.						
7. I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.						
8. I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.						
9. I don't get much personal strength and support from my God.						
10. I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.						
11. I believe that God is concerned about my problems.						
12. I don't enjoy much about life.						
13. I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God.						
14. I feel good about my future.						
15. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.						
16. I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.						
17. I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God.						
18. Life doesn't have much meaning.						
19. My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.						
20. I believe there is some real purpose for my life.						

SWB scale copyright © 1982 by Craig W. Ellison and Raymond F. Paloutzian

APPENDIX C

Parent/Guardian/Student Consent Letter and Forms



Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church

Council on Youth Ministries

June 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

At Summer Camp this year, your child has an opportunity to participate in a study which involves teaching the spiritual disciplines to youth. The Way2Live curriculum has been written and will be used at all SWTC youth camps. The purpose of this study is to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being by teaching six selected classic spiritual disciplines to youth in a camp setting.

As a part of measuring the effectiveness of this study, each youth will be asked to complete two surveys at summer camp, and repeat the same two eight weeks after the camp experience. (To review these surveys please visit www.reachingyouth.org).

The survey will ask your child about his/her spiritual life and religious habits. The survey will be carried out during the summer camp schedule and will take a total of 30 minutes to complete. The survey is totally anonymous; there are no simple identifying marks, and there is no place for children to put their names.

When the results of the study are reported, all answers will be grouped together, so no one can trace a specific answer back to one youth. Your child's involvement in this study is completely voluntary, meaning that she or he can skip questions or stop doing the survey at any time. If your child doesn't complete the survey, this will not affect your child's summer camp experience in any way. The results of this study will be made available on our Web site in June 2007

To indicate whether your child can or cannot take part in the study, please complete the enclosed permission slip and return it to us in the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope (Attn: Office of Youth Ministry, 16400 Huebner Road, San Antonio TX 78248). Or if you would like to talk to someone about the study, please contact Rev. Rusty Freeman, SWTC Director of Youth Ministries, 21-408.4510 or rhf143@aol.com.

This study has been approved by the Doctor of Ministry Department at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.

Thank you for considering our study.

Rusty Freeman

Parent/guardian consent form

Please indicate whether your child(ren) CAN or CANNOT participate in the survey, then sign and return this form in the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope.	
(Please print.)	
Child's name _____	Child's birthdate _____ month / day / year
Child's name _____	Child's birthdate _____ month / day / year
I understand the nature of the study, and I DO give permission for my child(ren) to take part in the study.	I understand the nature of the study, and I DO NOT give permission for my child(ren) to take part in the study.
_____ Parent/Guardian signature	_____ Parent/Guardian signature
Date _____	Date _____
Address _____ _____ _____	Address _____ _____ _____

I give permission for my child(ren) attending the **Southwest Texas Conference (SWTC) of the United Methodist Church Youth Summer Camp**, to participate in this study. I understand that I will be allowing my child(ren) to participate in a confidential study which asks questions about spiritual lives, religious habits, and overall sense of spiritual well-being. Results of this study will help increase spiritual awareness and the practice of the six spiritual disciplines in the lives of teens as well as assist pastors and youth leaders to develop ways to teach, disciple, and encourage youth in their relationship with God.

My child(ren)'s participation in this study will be completely voluntary. Therefore, my child(ren) can skip any questions on the survey or refuse to complete the surveys at any time. All information provided by my child(ren) is anonymous and will be kept confidential. Results of this study will never identify my child(ren).

My child(ren) will be asked to complete two surveys at the start of camp, *Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB)* and *Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS)*, a repeat of the SWB upon completion of the camp, and a repeat of both the SWB and the SAS eight weeks after camp (these will be mailed to your home). Each survey takes 10 to 15 minutes to finish.

If you wish to see a copy of the surveys go to www.reachingyouth.org. If you have questions about your child(ren)'s participation in the study, contact Rev. Rusty Freeman, SWTC Director of Youth Ministry at 210.408.4510 or rhf143@aol.com. Results of this study will be published and presented through professional and scholarly forums. Results will also be posted on our Web site by June of 2007. This study has been approved by the Doctor of Ministry Department at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.

Student consent form

Your parents/guardians gave you permission to take part in a survey at the Southwest Texas Conference Youth Summer Camp. The goal of this study is to develop and evaluate a contemplative youth ministry curriculum model. The study seeks to deepen Christian discipleship and increase spiritual well-being among youth by teaching six selected classic spiritual disciplines—worship, prayer, study, service, fasting and celebration.

You should know that the survey is totally anonymous. This means no one—not your parents, your pastor or youth director, not even your friends—will know what you wrote on the survey. And when the results of the study are reported, everyone's answers will be grouped together so no one can trace your answers back to you. You should also know that your involvement in this study is completely voluntary, which means you can skip questions or stop doing the survey at any time.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be given two different surveys at the beginning, end, and eight weeks after camp. The surveys include the *Spiritual Well-Being (SWB)* survey and the *Spiritual Assessment Survey (SAS)*. The surveys ask questions about your spiritual life and religious habits. The surveys will take you a total of 30 minutes to complete. Everyone attending camp will be asked to take the surveys.

If you want to do the surveys, read this, then sign your name.

Any questions I had about the study have been answered, and I understand that

1. I am agreeing to be in this study, which asks questions about my spiritual life and religious habits.
2. My answers on the survey are anonymous, so *no one*, except me, knows what I wrote.
3. My answers on the survey will be kept strictly confidential (this means private).
4. My participation in this study is completely voluntary. Therefore, I can skip any questions, or even stop doing the study at any time for any reason.
5. My answers will be grouped with other students' answers, then used to help increase spiritual awareness and the practice of the six spiritual disciplines by teens.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Rev. Rusty Freeman, SWTC Director of Youth Ministries 210.408.4510 or rhf143@aol.com.

Blessings to you and thank you for your help!

This study has been approved by the Southwest Texas Conference Office of Youth Ministry and the Asbury Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry Office. 14 June 2006

APPENDIX D

Follow-Up Survey Letter

Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church

Council on Youth Ministries

September 15, 2006

Dear Summer Camp Participant,

Thanks again for joining us for the WAY2LIVE Summer Camps 2006 of the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. It was great to have you with us and I hope you were blessed by the Lord.

In this letter I am sending the **final surveys for the study** we are conducting. Your response on these two surveys is so important! Remember that everything you do is confidential. We will be using this information for research purposes only and to help improve future youth camps and retreats.

Please take time to complete both surveys and send them back as soon as possible in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. (If you are an adult 19 years and older, please disregard these surveys as we are only testing students.)

One final note, if you never turned in the parent/student consent form you can download one on the summer camp page of our Web site. www.reachingyouth.org. This is very important so please don't forget!

May God continue to bless you as you grow in His grace. Thanks again for taking the time to help with this study.

Grace and peace,



Rev. Rusty Freeman
Director of Youth Ministries, SWTC



APPENDIX E

A Contemplative Youth Ministry Model Curriculum

Summer Camp 2006 “Way2Live”

Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church

I. Overview

A. Theme

1. Way2Live: 6 Habits That Will Change Your Life

B. Purpose

2. To develop a contemplative youth ministry model for youth in retreat in order to teach 6 spiritual disciplines to youth.

C. Objectives

1. To increase the awareness, and practice of the classic Christian spiritual disciplines in the lives of youth who attend summer camp.
2. To develop six spiritual discipline habits in the lives of youth in a retreat setting.
3. To use the CYMM as a means to evangelism, discipleship, and development of leaders.

II. Schedule

A. Sunday

1. 3 pm Staff Arrive & Set Up
2. 6 pm Registration Party
3. 7 pm Orientation & Welcome
4. 7:30pm Explanation of Camp Questionnaire
5. 8 pm Growth Groups 1 (SWB/SAS)
6. 9:15 pm Group Games
7. 10 pm Worship 1
8. 11 pm Bonfire
9. 11:30 pm In Cabins
10. 12 pm Lights Out

B. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

1. 8 am Wake Up Call
2. 8:30 am Breakfast
3. 9 am Morning Watch 1,2,3
4. 9:30 am Alone Time with God 1,2,3
5. 10 am Growth Groups 2,4,6
6. 11 am Life Application
7. 12 pm Lunch
8. 1 pm Recreation Option 1 (Swim, ropes course, field games, arts & crafts)
9. 2 pm Recreation Option 2 (Swim, ropes course, field games, arts & crafts)
10. 3 pm Recreation Option 3 (“Feet on the Bed”: F.O.B., arts & crafts, games)
11. 4 pm F.O.B.
12. 4:30 pm Growth Groups 3,5,7
13. 5:30 pm Life Application

14. 6:30 pm Dinner
15. 7 pm Theme Party (On Wednesday, worship and the theme party switch)
16. 9 pm Worship 2,3,4
17. 10:30 pm Snacks
18. 11 pm In Cabins
19. 11:30 pm Lights out

C. Thursday

1. 7:30 am Wake Up Call
 2. 8 am Bolivian Cross Breakfast
 3. 9 am Cleanup Camp
 4. 9:30 am Growth Groups 8 (SWB)
 5. 11 am Worship 5
 6. 12 pm Camp Dismissed
- Eight Weeks after camp (SAS)

III. Worship Index

A. Worship 1 (Sunday p.m.)

1. Purpose: To introduce the theme for the weekend “Way2Live: 6 Habits That Will Change Your Life”
2. Speaker: Introduces theme, explain experimentation of camp, explain SWB and purpose for teaching 6 spiritual disciplines to youth. The speaker will be asked to develop his/her own talk outline in conjunction with the theme.

B. Worship 2 (Monday p.m.)

1. Purpose: To introduce a multisensory worship experience and to emphasize the two spiritual disciplines of worship and prayer.
2. Speaker: Explains flow of MSW. The purpose in this worship time is to experience God in a variety of ways through a series of stations. (Play-doe, banner prayers, cross notes, candle altar, prayer bracelets).

C. Worship 3 (Tuesday p.m.)

1. Purpose: To continue with an interactive worship style and to emphasize the disciplines of study and service.
2. Speaker: Speaks on the habits of study and service. (Illustration: Jesus as one who assumed the role of servant: washed the feet of the disciples, his passion upon the cross, Philippians 2.) MSW experience: Four available stations: foot-washing, anointing with oil, Scripture basket, letters from God.)

D. Worship 4 (Wednesday p.m.)

1. Purpose: To teach about the habits of celebration and fasting while enabling youth to experience these disciplines first hand. (Youth are given an option to skip dinner.) This service is also offered as a time of commitment and response to God’s grace.
2. Speaker: Speaker gives a brief teaching lesson on the habits of celebration and fasting and how the two are connected. Speaker guides youth through a brief time of prayer and response to what God is doing in their lives as a result of the fast. Responses included: 1) first time commitment to Jesus Christ, 2) rededication of life to God, 3) felt God close, 4) call to full-time ministry.

E. Worship 5 (Thursday a.m.)

1. Purpose: To summarize the 6 habits and implore the youth to use these in their daily lives.
2. Speaker: Summarize habits and offer a challenge to develop them for daily spiritual growth. Youth are asked to fill out commitment cards naming two habits they pledge to practice on a regular basis, and naming one person who will help hold them accountable to this action.

IV. Large group introduction

A. Theme

1. The theme of camp is *Way2Live: 6 Habits That Will Change Your Life*
2. The habits that we will practice are: *Worship, Prayer, Study, Service, Celebration, and Fasting*. One way to remember these habits is through learning this phrase which takes the first letter of each habit and forms a sentence with them: (WPS,SCF) “We Plant Seeds, the Spirit Creates Fruit.”

B. Purpose

1. The purpose of summer camp is to deepen our relationship with Christ through learning and practicing the classic Christian disciplines (or habits) that help strengthen faith.
2. These 6 Habits (worship, prayer, study, service, celebration and fasting) will increase our awareness of the presence of God, give us creative ways to grow in our faith, and help us learn how to approach God in new and exciting ways.

C. Explanation of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) & Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS).

1. The curriculum for this camp is brand new and experimental. We want to gauge how effective you think it is in your life and to what extent it helps increase your awareness of God through practicing the six Habits of faith.
2. Once again, the purpose for the questionnaire:
 - a. To what extent are youth presently engaged in the six spiritual discipline Habits (Questionnaire 1: SWB & SAS)
 - b. To see how the practice of the six Habits increased youths awareness of God (Questionnaire 2: SWB)
 - c. To determine if after camp the six Habits are still being practiced among youth (Questionnaire 3: SWB & SAS)
3. Please remember that the questionnaires are all an anonymous so please be completely honest and open. Your names will never be connected to the information collected or to the scores. The purpose of this questionnaire is for research purposes only.
4. Give an additional and personal explanation of my Doctor of Ministry project and asking the youth to participate fully.

V. Growth Groups / Life Application

A. Leader’s note: elements of growth groups

1. Contemporary example (MySpace, etc.)
2. Biblical teaching / verses
3. Spiritual formation teaching
4. Interactive Questions & Discussion (T or F, Agree or Disagree)
5. Game or Initiative
6. Life Application / Hands on practice

- B. Leader guidelines:
1. Please, stress the importance of keeping confidential what is shared.
 2. Please, allow everyone to share, and no one person to dominate (including the leader)
 3. If deep theological or spiritual questions come up that are too time consuming for the group, ask the youth to meet with you, or the Camp Pastor, later to talk about these.
 4. Ask everyone to respect and listen when a person is talking.
 5. Ask the group to “covenant” with you to participate fully in all the experiments, practices, and purposes of the camp to develop habits for spiritual growth.
 6. Pray together before starting.
- C. Growth Group 1: Introductions (Sunday p.m.)
1. Purpose: The purpose of this first growth group is to:
 2. Interact with the other persons in the group.
 3. Review the theme and purpose of the camp.
 4. Take Questionnaire 1
 5. Option 1: Power-Point Games:
 6. Option 2: “Large Group Games”
 7. Questionnaire 1 & 2: Youth are given 45 minutes to complete the SWB and SAS scales.
- D. Growth Group 2: Worship (Monday a.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Worship.
 2. Illustration from MySpace
 3. Defining Worship
 4. Agree or Disagree.
 5. What God’s Word Says!
 6. Understanding Worship: The Habit of Worship
Life Application: Practicing the Habit of Worship.
 7. Practice 1: Life Map
 8. Practice 2: MySpace
- E. Growth Group 3: Prayer (Monday p.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Prayer.
 2. Google This.
 3. What is prayer?
<http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=18082060>
 4. Look up and read aloud the following verses on prayer:
 5. True or False
 6. Goofy Shoe Game
 7. Life Application 2: Practicing the Habit of Prayer.
 8. Practice 1: Art Prayer
 9. Practice 2: Strolling Prayer
- F. Growth Group 4: Study (Tuesday a.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Study.
 2. American Idol
 3. Growing Like Christ
 4. Questions:

5. What God's Word says about study and meditation?
 6. How do you spend your time?
 7. Just for Fun: Would You Rather.....?
 8. Life Application 3: Practicing the Habit of Study.
 9. Practice 1: Labyrinth
 10. Practice 2: Stations of the Cross
 11. Practice 3: Video Response
- G. Growth Group 5: Service (Tuesday p.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Service.
 2. Custom Shox
 3. Learning about Service
 4. Jesus is our example.
 5. Read Philippians 2:1-11
 6. Answer these questions:
 7. Making it real.
 8. Life Application 4: Practicing the Habit of Service.
 9. Practice 1: Foot-washing
 10. Practice 2: Acts of Imitation
 11. Practice 3: I'm Third
- H. Growth Group 6: Celebration (Wednesday a.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Celebration.
 2. Walt Disney World: Facts & Figures
 3. What are we celebrating? Harris, Harriett. "The Laughing Jesus."
 4. Is Celebration in the Bible?
 5. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
 6. Life Application 5: Practicing the Habit of Celebration.
 7. Practice 1: Affirm Me
 8. Practice 2: Praise Wall
 9. Practice 3: Cross Walk
- I. Growth Group 7: Fasting (Wednesday p.m.)
1. Purpose: To learn about the Habit of Fasting.
 2. Lilly's Story.
 2. What is fasting?
True or False: When I think about fasting, I...
 3. What the Bible says about fasting?
 4. Questions to Consider:
 5. Life Application 6: Practicing the Habit of Fasting.
 6. Practice 1: A Four-Hour Fast
 7. Practice 2: Media Fast
 8. Practice 3: Wants Versus Needs
- J. Growth Group 8: Conclusion (Thursday a.m.)
1. Purpose: The purpose of this final growth group is to take the final questionnaire and reflect upon the experience of camp.
 2. Camp Reflections
 3. Questionnaire 3
 4. Praying for each other

VI. Morning Watch / Time Alone with God

A. Morning Watch 1: Habits of Worship & Prayer

1. Begin with music (Way to Live 261).
2. Consider these statistics (Nappa 139).
3. Scripture Reading:

B. Alone Time with God: Worship & Prayer

1. Read the following verses: Psalm 62:1-2, Luke 11:2-4, Deuteronomy 4:29-31
2. Prayer exercises: Choose any of the following to help you pray during this time.
 - a. Think of all the descriptive words about God, then pray, “God you are....” (good, holy, just, loving, righteous....)
 - b. Think of five good things about your life. Then give God thanks for those things. (Nappa, Nappa, and Warden 143).
 - c. Ask God to guide your pastor, youth pastor, family, parents, siblings, and friends who come to mind. Pray, “Lord help....”
 - d. Breathe Prayer: This is the prayer of the heart. Journal

C. Morning Watch 2: Habits of Study & Service

1. Begin with music.
2. Jesus is our example of service.
3. Serving is not natural.
4. Today we are looking at service and study.

D. Alone Time with God: Service & Study

1. Read the following verses: Matthew 10:24, Matthew 12:18, Matthew 23:11, Acts 4:30, 1 Corinthians 9:19
2. Secret Service
 - a. Although you will be given several opportunities to serve others today, this challenge is given to serve others in “secret” ways.
 - b. It is important to be servants in ways that others might not even notice. Throughout this day see how many secret acts of service you can do for others. Service is not just what we do (our actions) but is also how we do it (our attitudes.) (Nappa, Nappa, and Warden 157). Journal

E. Morning Watch 3: Habits of Celebration & Fasting

1. Begin with music.
2. What is Fasting?

F. Alone Time with God: Celebration and Fasting

1. Study the picture of Jesus laughing. (<http://www.university-church.ox.ac.uk/sermons/Parish/LaughingJesus19-01-03.htm>)
2. Read the following verses: Genesis 18:13, 15, Genesis 21:6, Ecclesiastes 3:1-2,4, Luke 6:21.
3. Journal

VII. GROUP GAMES

- A. Purpose: To build community at camp among youth during the first night or to be used as fillers during small group times.
- B. Electricity (EGAD! Ideas <http://www.egadideas.com/ideas.asp>)
- C. Elves, Wizards, and Giants (EGAD! Ideas <http://www.egadideas.com/ideas.asp>)
- D. Criss-Cross, Crash (EGAD! Ideas <http://www.egadideas.com/ideas.asp>)
- E. 20 Questions

1. The group divides into four teams and sits in a large square with orange cones marking the four corners. Place a large taped “x” in the middle.
2. Four people are chosen, one from each team, brought into the middle, and given an identity (a specific animal, a famous person, a Bible character, etc.) Once they are whispered their identity, they run back to their group where questions are asked as to who they are. The person can not say a word, only shake his head ‘yes’ or ‘no.’
3. This is very fast paced even though the groups have 20 Questions to guess.(Note: If the guessing takes too long, modify the game by allowing the person to return to ‘act out’ their identity while being asked ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions.”

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