



STUDENT JOURNEYS

 Aaron Hochgertel

It was a Sunday night two years ago.

Our church youth group had been divided into boys and girls that night, and I was leading the boys, letting them share any major “God moments” they had experienced lately. One of the boys, one who didn’t talk often, raised his hand and began to pour out his heart, sharing his battle with depression.

He told us that a week ago, he had been in his bathroom at home, considering suicide—he said he didn’t want to deal with the pain anymore.

But just as he’d been thinking about ending his life, he’d remembered a discussion we had at youth group the month before.

I had taught that even when we are at our lowest, even on our worst day, God is still speaking to us and is going to bring us through. He told us that when he remembered what I had said, he’d called out to God to speak to him, and he’d heard God say,



“My love will always be greater than your pain...just trust Me.”

After hearing his story, every guy in our group was in tears. I was in awe that God would take my simple words and use them to impact a student’s life. I guess that’s what keeps me passionate about youth ministry: You never know what to expect or what will stick, but you always keep planting. A student might never remember one of my lessons, but they’ll remember that I cared enough to teach them.



That's what I love about teens—they don't care about the words; they care about the heart behind the words. If every student who comes through our youth ministry knows that I love them and, more importantly, that Jesus loves them, then I call that success.

My words aren't magic, and to be honest, I don't even clearly remember every lesson. But God plants something into these students' hearts, and only God knows when it will produce a harvest. I am so blessed and honored to be used by God to pour into these teens' lives.

...And to think, I almost walked away from it all.

After graduating from high school, one of my biggest struggles was deciding where I would pursue my education. My desire was to go to Oklahoma, but God had different plans for me. I heard Him tell me to stay at my home church and accept the position of Youth Ministry Director. For many people, leaving home is a sign of faith, a willingness to follow God. But for me, staying where He placed me was my act of faith.



Then one day, my dad pointed me to the Charis Online website, and immediately I knew that this was the path for me. Without it, I would not be able to go through school and minister to these teens at the same time.

**I am so excited to see
God at work in me and to see
it to flow into these
young men and women,
just like it did on that
Sunday night.**

If you would like to share your Student Journey, email us at
Online@CharisBibleCollege.org

A staff writer will contact you if your story is selected to be featured in the Charis Community.

