



THE STATE — OF THE — YOUTH

WELCOME TO THE STATE OF THE YOUTH

Kidville Parents,

Hello and greetings from the staff at Second Baptist Church! If you are reading this, then you are a part of one of the most exciting things in our church family, the future. I (Stephen) have so enjoyed the past 2 years of getting to serve as the Pastor of Students and Young Adults for this wonderful congregation. I thoroughly believe that God has placed in my heart a passion for teenagers in my current stage of life. One of my greatest joys in Student Ministry is getting to see the maturing and developing of young people in their spiritual life and I have the privilege to play a small part in that development.

One of the things I love about this church family is the insistence on fulfilling the great commission, as should be the goal of every church. However, Jesus never called his followers to have a Student Ministry. He never called us to have a Children's Ministry. He never called us to have Sunday School or Wednesday Night Bible Studies. What he did call us to do was to make disciples. We take that responsibility very seriously at Second Baptist. However, I am keenly aware that there is no way I can disciple our teenagers alone, nor do I intend to. I believe with all my heart that the best and most biblical form of discipleship happens at home.

So, as I've prayed and racked my brain for the past year on how I can aid and equip the families in our church to do just that, I continually felt led back to the future of our Student and Young Adult Ministry, you! You of course are not in the 5th and 6th grade, but you have children who are. You may have teenagers of your own, and if so, you are already in a unique battle all of its own. But as a parent of 5th and 6th graders, you are on the cusp of a battle which the enemy has been preparing long before your child was born. It is a battle for their heart. It is a battle for their mind. It is a battle for their soul. And it is a battle that very few parents know how to navigate on their own. That is the purpose of this newsletter.

I will not pretend to know the first thing about parenting or having children, as I do not have any of my own. What I can tell you is that I know teenagers; I was one not too long ago! I know what they are going through, and I know the struggles they face day to day. Struggles, that your preteen will be facing very, very soon, if not already. What I hope to accomplish with this letter each month (as the Lord wills) is not a reinvention of the wheel or a Christian Parenting 101. I simply hope to connect with you and offer some words of encouragement as you cross the bridge between raising a Christian child and a young Christian man or woman. I hope this letter gives you some peace of mind knowing that you are seen, you are prayed for, and you are not alone.

Some things you can expect each month: **An update on the latest happenings in the 412 Student Ministry.** I am a strong believer, along with the Pastor, in Expository Bible Study. However, I also know that teenagers are going through very specific and unique challenges that the Book of Leviticus may not be too helpful with for 12 straight weeks. I try to keep our weekly Wednesday Service, AXIS, relevant and specific to their own spiritual development. Each month you will be able to see here what topics and scriptures we are studying that month, as well as what fun activities or events we did. This may be something you'd want to share with your own 5th or 6th grader to build excitement about one day being in the 412 Student Ministry themselves.

Pop Cultural Trends relevant to teenagers. It seems that our culture is almost changing by the day, sometimes by the hour. As someone who spends a lot of time with teenagers and social media, I have a finger on the pulse of this ever-changing cultural climate. Each month I'd love to share with you a few short things I am noticing in youth culture and trends that I believe have a spiritual significance in their life. Like I mentioned earlier, we are in a battle and the enemy wants your children. I hope to offer you some things to think about and maybe even talk to your children about. These would be great topics to bring up with your kid and just see what they already know or think about these certain things. Remember, if they don't learn it from you, they will learn it from someone else. As this section was the inspiration behind the *The State of the Youth*, it will naturally be the longer section of the letter.

Bible Basics! I truly believe that good Biblical teaching is not meant for the church alone. You cannot expect your child's Sunday School teacher or Bible Drill Coach to teach them about the Bible alone. You must take up that responsibility for yourself. See the Church as a supplement to your child's (and your own) regular diet of being in the Word at home. With that said, I want to offer you some *Theology 101*, if you will, to give you a starting place to talk with your children about the Bible. I find that many Christian parents want to go deeper with their children into God's Word, but don't know where to start. This will give you a starting place to begin expounding on the richer truths from God's Word with your preteen. You may find it

encouraging that every parent receiving this letter will be talking with their preteen about these same Biblical truths. You are not alone!

Finally, what you may find most helpful in communicating with your preteen is knowing the language that they speak. Yes, I mean their **Gen Z lingo**, and YES, it is its own language! I'll be helping you out with that, you're welcome. Mom/Dad/Grandparent/Guardian... You are not cool... And they won't think you are cool for the next 7 years until their first semester of college and they are starving. In the meantime, it will at least be helpful to understand what they are saying, and you may even want to lean into it and just be *cringe*.

If you've made it this far into the letter, I commend you. Do not expect each of these to be this long, but as it is the inaugural letter, I hoped to explain some of my inspiration by it. I want you to know I am praying for you. The staff is praying for you. Our church is praying for you. You are not alone. We want to come alongside you and be a resource for as you fulfill the great commission in your own home. Please feel free to reach out with any comments or questions, we would love to help you in any way we can.

Following His lead,
Stephen Yates,
Associate Pastor of Students and Young Adults

