

WEEKDAY  
Christian Education  
for kids



*It would be great if every child realized he/she is valued and loved!*

*It would be great if every child was equipped to make good choices in a culture that is far from good!*

*It would be great if every child understood why character matters!*

*It would be great if every family had support in helping develop their children's character!*

**For more than 70 years, Weekday Christian Education has made “it would be great if” a reality in Evansville.**

Weekday Christian Education is unique in that it provides the only legal means by which Christian education is allowed during the school day. “Released Time” classes reach children who otherwise would never enter a church.

## The Need

*Today, more than ever, children need the hope only found in Jesus Christ.*

### **It would be great if every child realized they are valued and loved!**

Poverty, abuse, neglect, broken homes, violence in schools and neighborhoods, exposure to drugs and alcohol, bullying and harassment are just a few of the challenges children face on a daily basis. WCE staff share God's love with nearly 1,000 children each week. The staff help children discover purpose and meaning for their lives in line with God's Word.

### **It would be great if every child was equipped to make good choices in a culture that is far from good!**

Good role models are few and far between in today's culture. WCE staff help children build a strong foundation in a world of shifting values and morals. WCE's Bible education prepares them to be responsible adults, contributing community citizens and wise people. Research shows that youth who regularly participate in religious activities like WCE are often more successful in all aspects of school and in the community, such as:

- Improved involvement and development in school and in the community
- Improved relationships with family and friends
- Stronger self confidence and regard for others
- Reduction in risk-taking behavior
- Positive coping skills for a variety of life situations
- A greater connection to God, leading to a stronger understanding of life and a greater self-purpose.<sup>1</sup>

### **It would be great if every child understood why character matters!**

Research shows that youth who regularly participate in religious activities like WCE are, on average, **39% less likely to engage in 10 high-risk behavior patterns**, especially use of tobacco, illicit drugs, school problems, alcohol abuse, antisocial behavior, and driving and alcohol. In addition, they are, on average, **26% more likely to have 8 indicators of thriving**, especially getting good grades in school, resisting danger, maintaining physical health, and leadership.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bavolek, Stephen J. (2003). *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Community*. Dartmouth Medical School Institute for American Values.

<sup>2</sup> Scales, Peter C. (2007). *Early Spirituality and Religious Participation Linked to Later Adolescent Well-Being*. The Search Institute [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

## EVANSVILLE AREA COMMUNITY OF CHURCHES CASE STATEMENT

### **It would be great if every family had support in helping develop their children's character!**

Families face overwhelming cultural opposition to healthy character development in our society. As a completely voluntary program, WCE supports parents and helps reinforce values and morals that are important to them.

### **What We Do: Our Mission**

Weekday Christian Education believes all children deserve to know of God's eternal love for them. We do this by sharing God's Word with Vanderburgh County children, and by teaching and applying Biblical lessons to their lives.

### **Why We Exist: Our Vision**

The children of Weekday Christian Education will grow toward becoming compassionate, responsible, productive individuals and maintain a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **What Guides Us: Our Core Values**

<b>Faith</b>	Trusting belief of God in action.
<b>Hope</b>	Sharing of our hope in eternal life through Christ.
<b>Love</b>	Loving God and others because God first loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.
<b>Joy</b>	Sharing joy through Christ with the children of our community.
<b>Service</b>	Humbly serving God and sharing joy through Christ in all we do.

### **Our History**

Evansville Area Community of Churches was founded in 1942, when a group of local churches came together to offer nondenominational community-based programs. Weekday Christian Education (Weekday) was the first of these programs.

Weekday Christian Education is a national Released Time Bible Education (RTBE) program, whereby students may leave school with parental permission to attend off-site Bible classes during the school day. It is the only legal means by which Christian education is allowed during the school day. Released Time Bible Education started in 1914, with 619 students attending off-site Bible classes in Gary, Indiana. By 1942, RTBE had grown to serve 1.5 million students attending classes in 46 states.

In 1940, an ecumenical committee of seven people met in Evansville, Indiana to discuss the implementation of RTBE classes locally. This committee included members who were Jewish, Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran and Methodist. The committee met for more than a year, ironing out details about how the program was going to work. More than 14 months after discussions began, the plan was presented to the school board and approved for implementation.

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In September 1943, the first Weekday Christian Education classes were held in Evansville, Indiana. There were three classes, all at the high school level in buildings adjacent to Lincoln, Central and Bosse High Schools.

1944 - Classes were increased to include classes for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

1952 – The U.S. Supreme Court upheld RTBE programs as legal in all 50 states (Zorach v. Clauson). The three requirements for an RTBE to be legal are: 1. Parental permission must be given. 2. Instruction must take place off school grounds. 3. No state resources may be used.

1958 - 2,348 children were enrolled in the Weekday program in 29 schools.

1962 - The first mobile classroom was available for the children who had previously had to be bused to nearest but distant churches. Ten schools in all, West Terrace, Cynthia Heights, Harper, Vogel, Delaware, Tekoppel, Scott, Oak Hill, Dexter and Washington, were all served by the first mobile unit.

1965 – A second mobile classroom was purchased.

1972 – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, offering classes for 800 students in 27 schools.

1977 – Weekday is taught in all elementary schools.

1983 – Weekday changes classes from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades

1984 – EVSC schools change to Elementary/Middle school concept and thus lowers the number of elementary schools from 30 to 20.

2011 – Weekday purchased truck to transport portable classrooms.

2014 – Weekday Christian Education joined School Ministries whose mission is to assist new RTBE programs in getting started and to support existing programs on a national level.

2017 – Weekday Christian Education’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

2018 – Retired the Anderson Trailer and replaced with Welborn #2 Trailer.

Today, Weekday serves 800-1,000 third and fourth grade students each week.

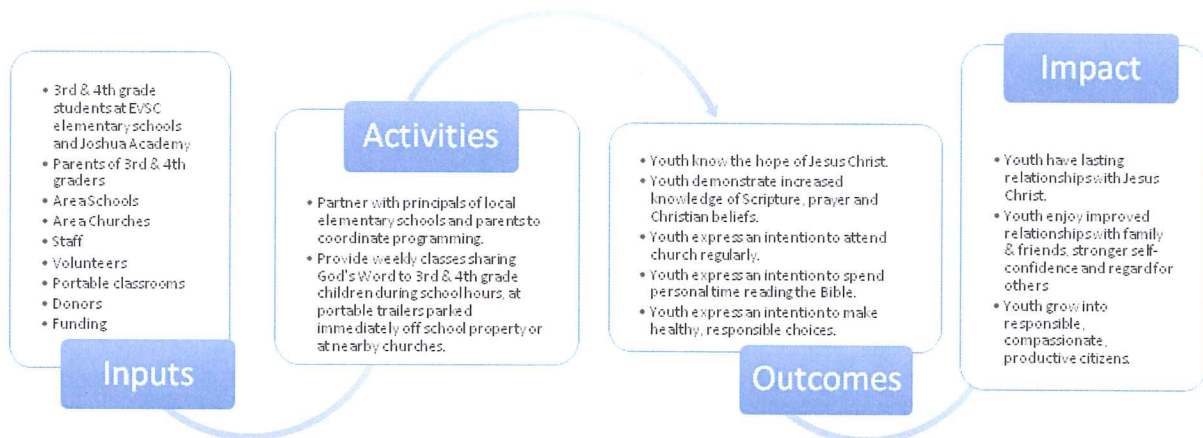
### **Our Strategy (Theory of Change)**

EACC Weekday Christian Education believes if children know of God’s eternal love for them, they will live as children of God. We share God’s love by sharing the Bible and Christian teachings with children in Vanderburgh County. We reach the children through partnerships with our area schools to offer Christian education during school hours through approved released time, with parental permission. School-based programs present an opportunity to reach the most children possible, as it simplifies logistics for parents and children.

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A statistical majority of the children we serve have no church home or church affiliation. Weekday Christian Education is the only exposure these children have to Jesus Christ, God, and teachings of Christian morals. EACC Weekday Christian Education shares the Bible with the children, as well as Biblically-based lessons that teach Christian principles and life lessons. Through Biblically-based lessons, children learn the importance of prayer, honesty, kindness, respect and love for all of God's creation. These lessons build the foundation for their growth into responsible, compassionate and productive citizens.

Through Weekday Christian Education, children know the hope of Jesus Christ, which inspires them to feel hopeful about their own future. This hope provides children with a future-orientation, allowing them to set goals, strengthen relationships and live with integrity.



### Our Program

EACC Weekday Christian Education (Weekday) provides Released Time Bible Education (RTBE, or Released Time Education) to third and fourth grade students in Vanderburgh County. RTBE allows students to leave school with parental permission to attend off-site Bible classes during the school day. It is the only legal means by which Christian education is allowed during the school day.

Weekday partners with all 21 elementary schools in Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and Joshua Academy, a public charter school located in the city of Evansville to offer weekly Christian education classes to all third and fourth grade students. Roughly 3,500 students are invited to take part in these classes each year, with 27-30% choosing to participate with parental permission. In 2015-2016, more than 1,000 students participated in Weekday Christian Education on a weekly basis.

Weekday classes are free. They are held during school hours in portable trailers parked immediately off school property or at nearby churches. Our three portable trailers are moved to 17 different locations

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each week. Classes are held Monday-Thursday from September through April. Weekday visits all 22 schools once every week. Students are escorted to and from classes by Weekday staff members.

Weekday Christian Education is non-denominational and, for many students, an introduction to Christianity and the Bible. Lessons taught include:

- God's eternal love for them
- Who is Jesus Christ?
- How to use the Bible
- What is prayer?
- How to pray
- Bible stories and how to apply them to their daily lives
- The importance of caring for God's world
- The true meaning of Christian holidays
- The importance of honesty, respect, and integrity
- How to be good citizens in their school, neighborhoods, and communities

Children learn songs, play games, and participate in skits to reinforce lessons. They form positive relationships with Weekday staff and volunteers

### **Our Impact**

Impact (from TOC)

- Youth have lasting relationships with Jesus Christ.
- Youth enjoy improved relationships with family & friends, stronger self-confidence and regard for others
- Youth grow into responsible, compassionate, productive citizens.
- An Alumni Survey was conducted in 2015:
  - 76% of survey respondents equate their participation in Weekday Christian education with positive changes in their emotional, mental or physical well-being, i.e., improved life management abilities, more God/others focused, improved relationships, improved school efforts and improved health choices.
  - 89% of respondents indicate they experienced changes in their spiritual lives as a result of participating in Weekday Christian Education, i.e., wanted to learn more about Jesus, felt closer to God, prayed more often, read Bible more often, attended local church and shared faith more.

Outcomes (from TOC)

- After attending Weekday Christian Education, 2015-2016 students self reported:
  - 88% demonstrated increased knowledge of Scripture, prayer and Christian beliefs.
  - 66% indicated their behavior at school and home improved.
  - 95% reported Weekday has helped them have a better understanding of right from wrong.
  - 4% wanted to find a church to attend

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- 30% wanted to read their Bible more
- 14% wanted to attend church more
- 67% indicated their attitude had improved.

Schools: Improved academic performance and positive moral and character development that is antithetical to engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior.

Independent research and experiences demonstrate that children participating in Released Time programs do better academically and have fewer behavioral problems. These programs have a positive impact on the culture and success of public school students by teaching biblically-based character and leadership skills, engaging in prayer for and with students, reducing disciplinary issues, reducing violence, reducing vandalism, and increasing students' responsibility and self respect.

A program evaluation of the Oakland (CA) Released Time program conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency documented that "students in the Released Time program performed better than their classmates as a whole in almost every category" and their scores "improved after one year...in three categories of literacy skills comprehension, spelling and vocabulary.

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