

Life Changes via Young Disciples Teams

This is a collection of stories from team members from the past years of Young Disciples. Hopefully from reading them it will allow you to be able to share in the tremendous blessings of being a part of the Young Disciples team.

A Week of Growth

by Robert Keller, Team 2008

When we began a particular camp, most campers barely knew how to make the Sign of the Cross. In addition, a majority of them were not baptized. By the end of the week many knew the Our Father, Hail Mary and could make the Sign of the Cross really well. One child in our class actually approached the priest about being baptized. Father also introduced Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to them. The kids were quite amazed and in awe during adoration, seeing Jesus in the Eucharist. They all sang well and listened to Father and prayed. For many of them it was incredibly moving and it quickly became their favorite part of the camp week.

(The camper who was interested in Baptism attended sacramental prep through the parish and was baptized in spring of 2009. The camper also had his first Reconciliation, received Confirmation and his first Eucharist. He is currently an altar server at his local parish.)

Sharing Jesus with Mom & Dad

by Nicholas Fonte 2007

In class one of my students raised his hand to answer a question. When he was giving his answer he mentioned in passing that he invited his mom and dad to pray "PAL" with him. PAL stands for Pray, Ask & Listen. I stopped him and asked him to elaborate. He said that he sat his mom and dad down, explained what PAL was to them and asked them to pray with him. He guided the prayer time, and although he was slightly

disappointed that his younger brother feel asleep, he was beaming that he was sharing Jesus with others. He wants to evangelize!

"God Bless the Little Children"

by Thomaz Fernandez, Team 2007

In my class there was a young boy who was baptized but from all that I could gather he had not received any religious education. His parents didn't go to church and didn't teach him about Jesus to much. He paid close attention in class and had many questions. He also volunteered to give answers to my questions, unfortunately but also expectably the wrong ones... One of the evenings we went out to dinner in his town. He was there, showed us around and played pool with me (he actually beat me..) On Friday, at the end of the camp he came to say good bye, told me how he enjoyed the camp and gave me a hug. Saturday morning, as I sipped my breakfast coffee, the priest came to see me and said he had spoken to the boy. The boy had asked Father if he could go to Mass on Sunday! He also told Father that he wanted to become Catholic... I pray that Mother Mary takes this little soul under her protection...

"Being Quiet to Listen"

by Renita Heier 2008 & 2009

It was our first day of camp and we were teaching the kids the PAL method of praying (Pray, Ask, Listen). I had a group of 5 and we had just gotten through the first two, Praise and Ask, so now it's time to listen. I explained to them that we have to close our eyes, be quiet, and listen for the voice of

God. However, sometimes God just whispers something in our ears, so that's why we need to listen very carefully. After camp that day a boy in my group was picked up by his grandma. His sister was also in the car telling her grandma about her day, while the boy was sitting quietly in the back seat. He then told his sister to be quiet because he was praying and listening to what God had to say to him.

Leading Prayer

by Amy Yeagle,
Teams 2009 & 2010

During the week, I would pray at the beginning and end of each lesson with my kindergarten and first grade class. After a couple of days, one child raised their hand and asked if they could lead the prayer. I said yes, and from that point on, the kids led all the prayer at the beginning and end of lessons, often with several children volunteering each time. These young children amazed me by leading the class in everything from the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Guardian Angel prayer and even the Fatima prayer, all without any prompting. Their eagerness to pray was very inspiring.

On the second day of a different camp, during the listening part of PAL, one of my young campers told me he heard God ask him, "Can I live in your heart?" When I asked him what he answered God, he said he answered, 'yes'. I was awed by this young child's holiness and openness to God.

Music for Jesus

by Shileng Yang, Team 2008

A boy in my class was rather talkative and did not like really enjoy participating in the camp songs, etc. His mother said that he came home from camp one day and wrote a song about Jesus, both lyrics and music, and sang it for her. I know that God was working in the heart of this child.

Second Best day of His Life!

by Simon Cao 2007

One day a lady that owned the local drug store in the town we were doing a camp in, came up to me and bought our ice cream shakes. She told me that one of the children in my class had told their mother that the first day of camp had been the second best day of his life. The next day he told his mother that the second day was just a little bit better than the last. This really made me feel great and made me feel satisfied with the work we were doing in this town.

Don't think you that don't change people lives because you do

by Val Schultz, Team 2005

Our last night of one of our camps, we were invited to a family's home after our potluck dinner. This young couple had three children, one of whom was at our camp. Before leaving, they asked us if we could pray with them, so our entire team sat with them in a circle on the floor and prayed for their close family friend who was going through a hard time. It was amazing to hear these little children pray from their hearts. Afterwards, we were getting ready to leave, and I noticed their second-grade daughter lying on the floor with her face down. I went and sat next to her, trying to get her to smile, and I noticed that she had been crying. I picked her up and held her in my lap, giving her a great big hug. She just said over and over again "I don't want you to leave." After a lot of tears and hugs, her mom turned to us and

said "Don't think that you don't change peoples lives, because you do."

"Cafeteria Catholic"

by Young Disciple, Team 2010

At our host home, our host mom admitted one night that she had been a "cafeteria Catholic" for awhile. She shared her story with us. Then she said that she thought it was good that we were there that week. Our commitment had really inspired her. She and her husband both enjoyed praying Night Prayer and the litanies with us. She even asked us where the could buy a *Christian Prayer* book. Before we left, our host dad told us that it had been really refreshing for him to see young people who were willing to serve others and not just themselves. He said that we gave him hope.

Sacred Space

by Sam Hetler, Team 2009

You can really tell a thing by its fruits! I knew that Young Disciples seemed like a well-founded inspired program from the brochure and even by training and putting the camps on, but I was able to see the fruits it put forth from the previous year! We were in Ellendale and it was the team's last host home dinner and what a way to end with the Lord showing me a sneak peek of the good this program is doing. IT was after supper that my student and his brothers took me upstairs to show off his room. There in his room, he had a sacred space!! (prayer corner) It was such a beautiful space of pictures and the Bible plus other books and also statues. At first I had thought that it was his mom's idea to set it up because she just has a profound love for God. The boy (as his mother mentioned) had picked it up from the Young Disciples camp last year! This opened my eyes to how much this can really touch kids! I really wish I had experienced this much sooner than my last camp. So please tell next years Disciples how much it can (and has) affect people. What a beautiful opportunity that we all had to be a part

of such a thing that has brought this fourth grade boy to his knees in such a sacred space!

"What is Jesus saying to you?"

by Ashley Grunhovd, Teams 2008-2010

I had a little kindergarten boy in my class that was always *very* excited to learn stories and prayers. He even organized a play of the Nativity story that my class performed for the rest of the classes at camp. After the potluck on Thursday, his mom told one of my teammates that during their family prayers in the evening, he taught them PAL (Praise, Ask, Listen). When his family got to the "listen" part he told them, "Ok, now close your eyes and imagine Jesus sitting next to you. Now listen, what does Jesus say to you?" It was precious to hear that a little six year old camper taught his family the importance of "listening" for God in prayer.

Community Witness

by Donnie Schenck, Team 2007 & 2008

"Preach the Gospel at all time, and if necessary use words." During our short stay in one particular small North Dakota town, when we weren't going to have supper with one of the families of the parish, we went to one of the cafes. During those times, God continued to manifest His faith, hope and love to us through the members of the community that we encountered. One time, an elderly man shared with us how much hope it gave him to see young people with hearts aflame, eager to share the Gospel.