

CedarCreek Students Restructure - Vision Document

Overview: As of September 16, 2018, CedarCreek Students is restructuring the Middle School & High School meeting schedule and rhythms in order to best leverage the little bit of time we have with students and allow as many students as possible to engage in a vibrant, life-giving relationship with God.

How did we come to this decision?

Almost two years ago the Student Team began noticing that our student attendance was on a downward trend and had arrived at a point where our student percentages were not in a healthy range based on national averages. Nationally, the average Student attendance is 10% of the overall weekly attendance. These charts capture CedarCreek Students attendance realities which put our attendance average at just over 6%. For more details reference the charts below:

Percentage of HS Students With Total Weekend Attendance

% For Mon. Night	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	3 Year Average
FN	1.49%	1.78%	2.42%	1.93%
PB	1.54%	1.74%	1.84%	1.72%
ST	2.92%	3.13%	3.79%	3.25%
WT	2.59%	2.71%	4.56%	3.20%
WH	3.29%	2.24%	2.27%	2.56%
Total	2.22%	2.23%	2.77%	2.40%

Percentage of MS Students With Total Weekend Attendance

% For Wed. Night	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	3 Year Average	% For Weekend Attendance	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	3 Year Average
FN	3.43%	3.89%	3.46%	3.63%	FN	4.23%	5.00%	4.72%	4.66%
PB	2.56%	2.78%	2.15%	2.50%	PB	2.86%	3.34%	3.22%	3.14%
ST	6.34%	7.30%	7.70%	7.06%	ST	3.59%	4.93%	4.51%	4.28%
WT	7.64%	6.28%	5.36%	6.46%	WT	3.29%	3.04%	4.82%	3.26%
WH	5.51%	5.33%	5.20%	5.30%	WH	4.26%	4.21%	4.54%	4.35%
Total	4.84%	4.67%	4.21%	4.58%	Total	3.44%	3.84%	3.80%	3.68%

Ultimately, we have not been able to scale ministry to students in a manner that ensures consistent ministry growth.

As we consulted other churches with approaches to student ministry that we highly respect (including North Point, Church of the Highlands, and NewSpring, among others) and collected input from CedarCreek Students staff, DreamTeam and parents, along with other CedarCreek staff, we realized that we needed values to guide our ministry to students. We developed the CedarCreek Students values, which correlate with the Spiritual Journey:

1. Irresistible Environment - We want to help create an irresistible environment where students have fun and want to bring their unchurched friends. *(Know God)*
2. Consistent Small Group Experience - We want to provide a consistent Group Leader for every student to help them take their next step. *(Find Freedom)*
3. Leadership Development - We want to help leaders take the next step in their spiritual development, serving in ministry, and duplicating themselves. *(Discover Your Purpose)*
4. Go Where They Are - We want every leader to actively engage in the lives of students inside and outside of church. *(Make a Difference)*

Throughout this process, we also discovered that CedarCreek Students has been doubling to tripling the number of weekly hours spent executing large and small group gatherings for students as compared to all of the other churches. We determined that the large amount of gatherings was creating a fractured focus and inability to live out the CedarCreek Students values. Until those values are consistently lived out, our Student attendance (and overall Student impact) is not likely to grow. This led the Student team to begin a project to strategically restructure and simplify the schedule and meeting rhythms of CedarCreek Students to better care for students, leaders, and families in a sustainable and scalable way.

Therefore, as of September 16, 2018, the weekly schedule for CedarCreek students at each Campus will be:

Middle School:

Large gatherings - Wednesday nights from 7-8pm

The meeting rhythm for this will align with the Groups Semester so they will meet for 13 weeks in the Fall/Spring and 6 weeks in the summer.

Groups – Saturdays at 5:15pm* and Sundays at 10:45am

These will take place year round.

High School:

Large gatherings - a student section will be created at Sunday's 12:30pm service*

These will take place year round.

Groups – Sundays after the 12:30pm service (from 2-3pm)*

The meeting rhythm for this will align with the Groups Semester so they will meet for 13 weeks in the Fall/Spring and 6 weeks in the summer.

*The Oregon campus weekend meeting times are still to be determined.

We believe that restructuring will actually increase our ability to come alongside families during such an influential time in their student's lives. We are improving current strategies and developing new strategies for doing this.

We will spend summer 2018 preparing for this restructure. We plan to be operating fully according to our restructure by the kickoff of our church wide Fall Groups Semesters (September 16, 2018).

What is the communication plan?

July 18	All CedarCreek Staff (via Ben's Weekly Staff Update)
July 22	Campus Student Directors meet with MS/HS Leaders
July 23	Call Leaders who were not in attendance
July 24	Email to Parents
July 30	Update Website with new Student Ministry info
Aug 4/5	Leaders contact students in their groups
Aug 11/12	Begin Announcing during MS Weekends (Have Announcement Slide ready)
Aug 19	Parent/Student Meeting (All 6 Campuses, run by Campus Student Director)
Aug 20	Social Media Announcement on Facebook & Instagram
Sep 4	Invite Post-Cards sent out (w/ new times/start dates, separate post card for MS & HS)
Sep 6/9	Begin Social Media 10 day countdown to launch (Facebook & Instagram)
Sep 15/16	Launch new MS Weekend Groups
Sep 16	Launch HS Groups
Sep 19	Launch MS Wednesdays

What is my role?

Whether you are a staff member, church member or DreamTeam member, your voice matters. We want you to understand the heart and thought processes behind our decision making and where to go if you have questions. Other tips:

1. Follow the communication timeline with us. It will help us align and care for our guests.
2. Help all those impacted (specifically DreamTeam members, parents and students) see the vision and opportunities for where we are headed.
3. Be prepared for questions. Listen empathetically. Utilize this document for guidance.
4. If you can't answer someone's question, connect him/her with your direct report.

FAQs:

Where did the CedarCreek Students values come from?

When this original project began almost two years ago, CedarCreek had not adopted the language for the Spiritual Journey (Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Your Purpose and Make a Difference). The Project Team recognized the need for values to guide the development of CedarCreek Students. As the Project Team researched growing student ministries nationwide, these four values made the most sense. Interestingly, once the Spiritual Journey became part of the CedarCreek Church culture, CedarCreek Students recognized the strong correlation between their values and the Spiritual Journey.

Why not just do Wednesday or the weekend for Middle School?

Due to varying attendance patterns at each campus (some had stronger Wednesday night attendance, while others had stronger weekend attendance), we didn't feel comfortable completely cutting Middle School gatherings on Wednesday or on the weekend. Instead, we decided to simplify while still giving Middle School students an option on the weekend and on Wednesday nights to allow them to engage wherever they may be on the spiritual journey.

What will be the goal of Wednesday night?

We will create an irresistible environment that is focused on students inviting their friends to that experience. It will be super focused on group games, hangout time, building relationships, and being a party for those 13 weeks each semester. The end goal of Wednesday nights will be to help students Know God by inviting them into a relationship with Jesus and then helping them take their next step to being involved in a Group on the weekend.

Our hope would be that as students get to know leaders and then move into group life on the weekend that their family would begin to attend on the weekend as well, which would allow us to engage the entire family unit in the spiritual journey.

How will Middle School Wednesday differ from the Weekend?

Wednesday nights will be focused on the "irresistible environment," value, taking on more of an outreach feel and focus. Our hope is that current students will feel comfortable bringing their unchurched friends. We will have Middle School Groups during the 5:15pm on Saturday and 10:45am on Sunday, where we focus on the "consistent small group experience" value.

Why did we decide to only do Middle School Groups on the weekend and not also on Wednesdays?

We considered the fact that the "front door" for Middle School students (based on new students who attend) has been on Wednesday nights as compared to the weekend.

In addition, the strategy of having Groups on weekends and on Wednesday nights is the one that we have been attempting to execute. It has been challenging for several reasons:

- Since most Group Leaders are unable to commit to serving on the weekends and on Wednesday nights, students have been unable to have a consistent leader.

- Since there were so many options for Group gatherings, students often attended at different times. This made it difficult for Group Leaders to build strong connections with students.

- As a result, there was a breakdown Group Leaders being able to partner with parents to help students take steps in the Spiritual Journey.

Why will the Middle School Wednesday night experience only be from 7-8pm?

The current Wednesday night experience runs from 7-8:30pm because we do a large gathering along with small group discussion. Because we are transitioning the Groups to the weekend, we can focus on creating an irresistible environment a reduced time on Wednesday. This will include about 40 minutes of strategic hangout time, concluding with a 10-minute message that helps students Know God.

Why is the middle school Wednesday experience 13 weeks during the Fall/Spring semester?

This will help us simplify as we align with the Adult Groups Semester. Also this adjustment will alleviate our staff/volunteers schedule to allow us to live out the values of "leadership development" (we will have margin in the schedule throughout the year, to not just onboard leaders but to properly train them as well) and "go where they are" (we will have margin in our DreamTeam members' schedules to be more engaged with students in the communities).

Why is there 10 minutes allotted for a message during Wednesday night?

We have many students who do not attend our church (or any church) during the weekend. These 10 minutes gives us an opportunity to have live communicators at the campuses teach and present the gospel in unique ways.

What curriculum will be used?

The large gatherings on Wednesdays will use the Orange curriculum (communicating the message with unique nuances via a live communicator).

The Groups on the weekends will use the the Orange curriculum (watching the videos from Orange with the brief message, along with the discussion questions).

What would the middle school weekend Groups look like?

It will begin with a very brief hangout. Next, we will watch the Orange teaching video, which is about 12 minutes. This message would be the same content as Wednesday night, but delivered in a different way through the platform of the Orange video. It will help remind students of the big idea, if they were there on Wednesday, and would help catch students up to speed, if they were not in attendance on Wednesday night. After the message, they would go to their Groups for discussion.

Why are we using the same message on Wednesday and the weekend?

The message on Wednesday will be live and give our Directors/interns/DreamTeam members the opportunity to communicate from the stage. They will add their personal stories to give it a more personal feel. The weekend will be using the Orange videos that have different communicators and different camera shots. If a student doesn't attend on Wednesday, they would not have the proper context going into their Groups. If a student did go on Wednesday, it would be good for them to be reminded of the content to help them in their Groups.

What about the spacing issues for Middle School Groups?

The campuses will have to get creative. Some campuses will be able to spread Groups out across the building, but other campuses might have a couple Groups within the Student Ministries room, which is what we currently do on the weekend.

Do we think the better Group experience would be on the weekend or on Wednesdays?

Currently, with a great deal of unchurched students on Wednesdays, the group experience is subpar as most students haven't bought into the idea of talking about a God they are not sure if they actually believe in. With our restructure, the better Group experience will be on the weekend. With the weekend emphasis being Groups, the students who have an intrinsic desire to be there are more likely to be there, which will help in engagement and discussion. Also, the Groups will be spread out between 2 services and we are creating the expectation on the front end that the environment will be a bit more relaxed on the weekend, which is conducive to a better/calmer Group experience.

What if our family attends the 9am service on Sunday?

We are passionate about getting Middle School students engaged in a Group so we will do everything we can to come alongside your family to make any adjustments needed. One possibility is that your student could attend the 9am service with you, and then attend their group during the 10:45am service while you serve during the 10:45am service. Another option would be to serve together as a family during the 9am service, then when your student goes to his or her group during the 10:45 you could attend service. Our Campus Student Director would be happy to talk through these or other options with you!

Why are we making a change for High School Groups from Monday night to after Sunday services?

We have not shown an ability to create an irresistible environment for high schoolers on Monday nights. In fact, we have found that our weekend adult service at CedarCreek actually already has all of the elements of an irresistible environment that we desire to create. We are hoping to leverage our weekend adult 12:30pm service to more effectively integrate high school students into the life of our church and spend time creating great Group experiences for them after the service. This will also minimize our High School Group Leader commitment from 2.5 hours a week to 1 hour a week to help them engage with students outside of church more.

Having HS groups at 2pm on Sunday seems like an awkward time...Has anyone tested this? Also, will their Groups be distracted by cleaning teams and other people that are in the building after the service?

Since we are syncing up the High School Groups with the 12:30pm service, we aren't as worried about the timing of High School Groups. Within this, we would have our High School students head to the Student Ministries room 10 minutes after service for announcements and lunch. Then they would disperse into Groups. As far as the cleaning of the building, that's something we would encourage the Campus teams to figure out. Depending on the campus, you have 4-8 Groups to figure out where to send throughout your campus. We will be keeping an eye on objective and subjective feedback as we step into this new rhythm.

Have we considered allowing Campuses to choose what time we want to host HS groups on Sundays? Perhaps in the evenings versus afternoon?

We have considered this, but it contradicts the value of having the Groups directly after the service in order to be most efficient with the time for our students and Group Leaders. Instead of going to service and leaving for a couple hours and coming back, they now can condense all of this experience into a shorter period of time.

How will this change our need for leaders? Will we need more leaders or less leaders to facilitate this plan?

For Middle School we will be able to start with less leaders which will allow us to develop the right leaders in the right way and not feel like we just need to fill holes. We will only be developing Group leaders for 2 services per weekend, instead of 4 weekend services and Wednesday night Groups. For High School, we are asking for less of a time commitment and giving back a night of the week to the Group Leaders, so this will be easier as well. Although it will be easier for each ministry, we will be able to focus on creating more consistent Group experiences and challenging leaders to engage their students outside of church.

How will my student grow/be involved during the time between semesters?

Middle School Students will have the weekend Group experience available year round. High School students will still be encouraged to attend the 12:30pm service and sit in the student section with their Group Leaders, or attend with their family year round. Ultimately, we believe the primary driver for a student's growth is the family, specifically the parents. Our role is to come alongside and work in conjunction with the family to support the spiritual development of the student that is already taking place in the home. Student Ministry is important but it can never replace the importance of the family.

What about Student Nights?

Student Nights have been something we have done to bring all of our students from all campuses together on a Monday night for a night of celebration and worship. Student Night would now be on a Wednesday night instead of a Monday night. Also, instead of doing three a year we would scale back to doing two a year. We would do one at the end of the Fall Semester and one at the end of the Spring Semester. It would be a huge celebration of everything God did that previous semester. The Summer Semester would naturally end with Fusion Camp.

What about SLT (Student Leadership Team)?

SLT has morphed into just another High School Group so we will stop doing SLT as it is currently run. This will allow high school students to go to groups after Sunday's 12:30pm service with their Group Leader. In place of SLT we will do a once a month "All Leader" meeting for all Middle School and High School leaders during the 9am where we will talk vision, conduct various trainings to help ensure our leaders are properly equipped and empowered.

What about SLDP (Student Leadership Development Program)?

SLDP will continue as normal for this upcoming school year. Over the winter we plan to evaluate this program and consider how it can be developed.