
Breakaway - Presenting the Gospel to Kids



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Breakaway Kids Camps

Our mission is to provide a fun environment where relationships are built and the gospel is shared so that lives are changed eternally.

Breakaway Kids Camps are Interdenominational Christian Holiday Camps for Kids located 2 hours south of Sydney, NSW. Australia.

The camps are held at Fitzroy Falls Conference Centre - Ryans Lane Fitzroy Falls, NSW Australia, during the January School Holidays. There is a Junior Camp for Primary Schoolers (Years 3-6) and a Senior Camp for High Schoolers (Years 7-12). There are also Summer and Winter Camps for Underprivileged Children. We aim to provide opportunities for young people to develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually in a healthy natural environment.

The camp team consist of Christian men and women who relate well to young people and who care for their well-being. They give their time on a voluntary basis

Introduction

Welcome to the Breakaway Kids Camps "Presenting the Gospel to Kids" Manual. This Manual has been put together so that you can be better prepared for Breakaway Camps and more aware of your roles and responsibilities. It has lots of ideas for what to do and how to do it.

What is the Gospel? What is the Message we are presenting? As we come from a diverse range of denominational backgrounds, these questions may have different answers.

We have collated some thought provoking information in our "Breakaway Gospel for Kids" manual. In this manual, we aim to answer these questions along with how to effectively present the gospel to these kids.

Below are some fundamental truths that we hold when presenting the gospel to kids.

Enjoy,

- Andrew Barrs (andrew@breakawaycamp.org.au) -

The Breakaway Mission

Our Mission is to provide a fun environment where relationships are built and the gospel is shared so that lives are changed eternally.

The Breakaway Mission statement was developed by the team in 2001. This statement qualifies what we do and don't do at Breakaway Camp. There are four main aspects of our ministry that are highlighted in the mission statement:

How We Provide A Fun Environment

- We provide a safe, fun environment in which campers can express themselves.

How We Build Relationships

- Our relationships will model Christ's love.
- Our relationships will be built upon effective communication within suitable boundaries.

How We Share The Gospel

- We share the gospel by creatively using the talents God has given us.
- We share the gospel by teaching from the Bible and serving like Christ.

How Lives Are Changed Eternally

- God will change lives eternally by his Holy Spirit through empowering the leaders.
- We will persevere in prayer and ongoing follow-up.

Hints For Sharing The Gospel At Camp

Child Evangelism Principles

At Breakaway Camp, we seek to maintain a balanced and realistic approach to child evangelism. There are errors at two extremes in ministry with children. There is the error of demanding too much - of expecting a level of understanding and response more appropriate to an adult. And there is the error of expecting too little - of putting off any challenge to respond to Christian truth until the child has attained an age of full responsibility, whenever that may be. These positive principles, however, can be affirmed in evangelistic and nurture ministry amongst children: -

- In most children, the transition from birth to adulthood is a process of gradual development, often punctuated by a number of surges at various points.
- As they grow, they are becoming more and more responsible for their own life and choices.
- We believe that children should be presented with the Christian message at any age in a way that is in keeping with their current development and that they may be expected to respond at their own level.
- We believe that even though the response a child makes towards Christ may not be a 'saving' response, it is nevertheless a response towards Christ and needs to be recognised, welcomed and affirmed as such. Because children are easily manipulated, special care is needed in leading children to Christ.

The following principles are acknowledged in helping children to commitment.

Conversion Is The Work Of The Holy Spirit

It must be God's Spirit who is moving the child - not the force of the leader's personality, or the pressure of other children. While it is the leader's responsibility to challenge a child to follow Jesus, mass public appeals or the emotional manipulation of a child's mind have no place at camp. Where possible, deal only with individual children, and allow the child to set the pace. Thoughtful questioning leads the child to express his or her understanding. Therefore we must not stereotype responses but help the child to make the response to which the Spirit is leading them at the time (even if it is one we do not expect - this takes maturity and discernment in the leader). At Breakaway Camp we make public appeals at the morning sessions but then we aim to disciple the children one on one and determine their individual situation with God.

Conversion Occurs Through The Proclamation Of The Gospel

If children are to respond to Christ, they need to be well taught in the Scriptures. Therefore teaching the Christian message together with its implications in practical life and service is the basic component of our ministry with children. Without that secure base, commitment is likely to be superficial.

Jesus Always Highlighted The Cost Of Following Him

A child must be faced with the cost in practical terms (Luke 9:23 - "Take up your cross"). Allow them to consider the following examples: -

- Make a regular time to pray and read the Bible.
- Obeying parents and teachers and helping others.
- Linking up with a Sunday school or Christian Youth Group.
- Being willing to be known as a Christian at School. Possibly subject to ridicule.
- Non-Christian family expectations (eg. Dramatic changes overnight - no more sinning etc.)

Our Responsibility

If we call children to commitment, then we must accept responsibility for the nurture of each of the children. If possible introduce the child to a local caring church. Make opportunity to discuss their spiritual walk, and be sure the child knows what to do when they feel they have failed God. It is extremely important to follow up the children in your room with letters, birthday cards, etc. after camp is over.

Five Important Points When Telling the Gospel

1. God Is Our Creator

The same powerful God that made the earth and the entire universe also made you. He made you special. He loves you very much and he wants you to love Him and be part of His family.

2. Our Rebellion

We try to live life our own way. We ignore God. This is called sin. Sin keeps us from joining God's family.

3. God's Judgement, Punishment and Rescue

We all sin, thus each one of us deserves to be punished. The punishment for sin is death. But none of us perfect. Even if we try to please God, we will still sin and be condemned.

God provided a way for us to overcome sin. Jesus took the punishment we deserve. He died on the cross even though He was sinless. And He rose again.

We are therefore able to avoid the eternal consequences of sin.

4. Accepting God's Forgiveness

We need to take responsibility for our sin and ask God for forgiveness. If we do this, God will always forgive. We need to also thank God for the sacrifice He made and His gift of forgiveness. We do this by praying.

5. Growing as One of God's Family

Once forgiven, you become God's child and become a member of His family. All Christians are in God's family. Thus we are all 'brothers' and 'sisters' in Christ.

As a child of God, we need to learn more about God and become more like Jesus. We learn more about him by reading the Bible and by going to church with other Christians. God encourages us to tell other people about Himself so that they may also become a part of the family of God.

God does not want any to suffer the punishment of sin.

Some Theological Terms Simplified

Eternal Life	Living with God forever after we die.
Forgiveness	Us saying sorry, then God saying it's OK and forgetting about what we have done wrong.
Heavenly Father	The perfect father - the kind everyone would want.
Judgement	God decides where you end up. He sees everything you have done wrong.
Justification	Put right with God - God says that you are OK.
Love	Really caring for someone, and showing it by doing things for them.
Redeemed	Saved - brought back to God. Jesus paid the price for our sins.
Repentance	Turning from sins.
Resurrection	Come back to life.
Sanctification	Being made right with God.
Sin	Not living with God as boss - we do wrong things - we have wrong thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes. We disobey God.

Your Testimony

Preparing Your Testimony

Before camp it is very useful to have written your testimony.

Having done this will help you when you're explaining to the kids why you believe. The aim of a testimony is to point the audience to what Jesus has done in your life. It is often a great introduction to a valuable talk about Jesus.

Therefore there is no need to highlight how bad you were before. Make your testimony personal and talk about how God has changed you. Acknowledge that God is still with you, helping you to change and become more like Jesus.

Use language that is understandable and use examples or illustrations that are familiar to the kids.

When preparing your testimony, it is good to ask yourself these questions: -

- Look at your present Spiritual Experiences
- Look at your past Spiritual Experiences.
- Who were the significant people in my own spiritual journey? Why?
- Why is The Cross important to you? What does this reveal about God?
- Challenge the hearers.
- What was your life like before conversion? (But don't focus on this as you speak)
- How did you first become aware of God?
- How did you receive Christ?
- What does the Gospel mean to you?
- How has your life changed? Where are you headed now?
- Challenge the audience

General Things To Be Aware Of When Leading A Child To Christ

In everything, we need to be sensitive. When a child asks a question, there may be a deeper purpose behind the question. For example: - A child asking "What about people who have already died?" may be thinking of a grandmother who has recently died. "Silly" questions may be real to the child.

When a child tells you that they want to become a Christian, check their understanding. Ask them about Jesus. Ask them what it is to be a Christian.

Then discuss the negative side of Christianity - "It is not easy" "People may make fun at you because of your faith" etc. so that they make an informed decision.

Don't forget to highlight the benefits. "You will be in the Family of God." "We will be brothers and sisters in Christ."

Not everyone is able to relate with children easily. You should practice explaining the gospel to another person as if to a child, and have the other person provide feedback.

If this is your first time leading someone to Christ, ask an experienced person to help you.

Pray - **STAY**

S - Sorry (Say sorry for the things you have done against God in the past. Also for ignoring him)

T - Thanks (Say thankyou to God for sending His Son into the world to teach us, love us, to guide us and to ultimately sacrifice himself for us)

A - Ask (Ask Jesus to become a part of your life. Ask him to be Lord of your life)

Y - Yes (Jesus will always say yes to this prayer. And he promises that once you have prayed this prayer, he will STAY with you for eternity)

Commit yourself to follow up throughout the year.

Presenting the Gospel to Teenagers

Characteristics of Secular Young People

Youth and young adults live in a world that is very different to their parents - it is filled with options and technology and career changes and moral possibilities. It is important to understand the world of the young person. Below are some general characteristics of young people today. Young people are: -

1. Ignorant Of Basic Christianity

- Often three generations removed from a Christian family.
- Most young people are quite naïve and gullible when it comes to Christianity.
- Most have never opened a Bible

2. Generally Seeking Life BEFORE Death Rather Than Life AFTER Death

- As opposed to the premillennial preaching of the 50's and 60's.
- Young people are interested in myth, astrology, the occult etc.
- Most want to know what benefits they would gain NOW.

3. Are More Conscious Of Doubt, Rather Than Guilt

- They are more likely to ask the questions, "What is true?" "Who am I?" "What has meaning?" rather than come to an understanding that they are sinful.
- They have more questions about the nature of God rather than the nature of me.

4. They Have A Negative Image Of Church

- It is a negativity based on ignorance. Most teenagers have never been to a Sunday Church service.

5. They Have Lots Of Sources Of Alienation.

- They feel they have no control over important things (over violence at school, over politics, over international issues (terrorism, boat people, poverty etc.))
- They feel they are powerless to affect change.

6. Are Often Untrusting - Deeply Cynical

- Often won't believe you because you represent the church.
- Do not trust "the establishment." This includes the Church

7. They Experience Forces In History As Out Of Their Control

- They are deeply pessimistic
- However, there is a growing commitment to justice and ethics.

8. They Experience Forces In Their Personality As Out Of Their Control

- Many have low self-esteem due to Weight, Depression, Anger, Relationships, Intellectual difficulties.

9. They Are Searching For A Better Place

- They are searching for a place to go where things are better.
- Yet they are still pessimistic.

How To Communicate The Gospel To Teenagers

How do young people learn?

- Young people learn primarily through experience NOT reason
- Young people learn from mentors they know they can trust (are you trustworthy?)
- Young people learn through watching and experience
- Young people learn through shared story - "what are other's experiences with this?"

1. It Is Our Responsibility To Proclaim The Gospel

- It is a long-term commitment. When Paul came to a new city, he always stayed for a significant period of time.
- We must take every opportunity to present the gospel. At every opportunity, Paul presented and argued for the Gospel.

2. Development of Christian Community

- As part of the thrust into the community, the Christian community developed a new way of living - a new community.

3. Gospel Communication Through The Expression Of Signs And Wonders.

- An integral part of the early Apostles presentation of the gospel was the use of signs and wonders.
- Communicate the fact that God is present with us NOW.

4. Gospel Communication Through Prayer And Praise

- Pentecost - praise first - then preaching.
- A worshipping community is an evangelistic community.

5. Flexibility Of Structure And Openness To Change

- See Acts 6.
- Don't ask the non-Christian to change - the church should change.

6. Social Action And Service

- Jesus healed the sick, empowered the weak, and took on the establishment.
- He was the Servant King.

7. Suffering

- Christians who impact the world will suffer.

8. Power of the Holy Spirit

- Acts of the Apostles is really about the Acts of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship is the awe, mystery, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship should crackle.
- Worship is intoxicating. There should be a thrill and passion and energy.

What Are The Essential Components Of The Gospel Message?

A Study of the Evangelistic Sermons in the book of Acts shows us what the Apostles thought the gospel message was. The sermons can be found in: -

Acts 2:14-40 - Peter at Pentecost

Acts 3:12-26 - Peter to the Jews

Acts 4:8-12 - Peter to the Jewish Council

Acts 5:29-32 - Peter to Temple Captain

Acts 10:34-43 - Peter to Cornelius and Family

Acts 13:16-41 - Paul to Jews at Antioch

Acts 14:15-17 - Paul to Farmers at Lystra

Acts 17:22-31 - Paul to Areopagus in Athens

Acts 26:2-23 - Paul to King Agrippa

Each message was presented differently because each message was presented to a different audience.

The message presented depends on the culture of the target audience.

Note that at the sermon at Athens, Paul does not even mention Jesus - but he does have to explain the nature of God and the nature of humanity.

At the sermon to the Jewish Council, Peter assumes that the audience already understands their need for salvation.

A deeper look at Acts 5:29-32 reveals the following essential components of the gospel message: -

1. God Has Revealed Himself

- Firstly through History (Prophets and Patriarchs)
- Secondly through Jesus

2. Know The Essential Facts about Jesus: -

- He was killed (crucified)
- He was raised to life (resurrection)

3. God Has Thereby Made Jesus: -

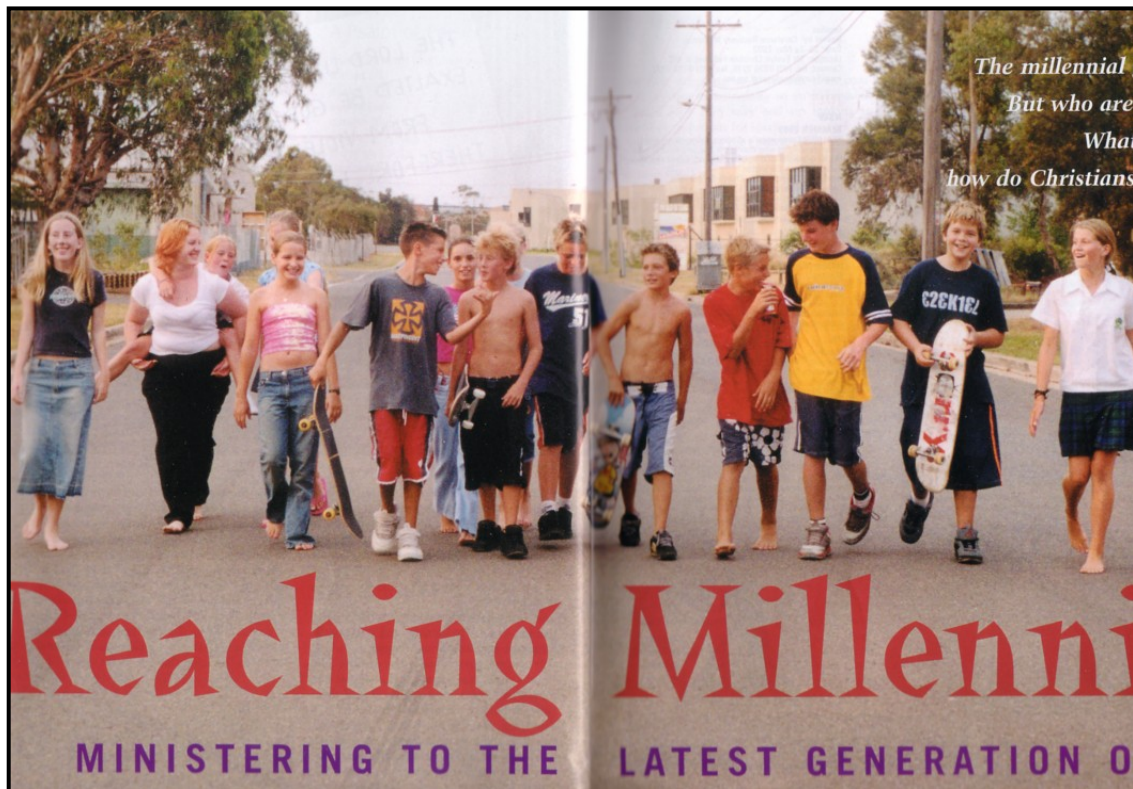
- Prince (Lord and Judge)
- Saviour

4. God Is Asking Us: -

- To Repent
- To Obey

5. God Will Then Give Us: -

- Forgiveness (through the blood of Jesus)
- Holy Spirit to enable us to live a new life.



Reaching Millennials

Ministering To The Latest Generation Of Youth...

Alive Magazine. April 2003

Andrew Menzies has over 15 years experience in ministering to youth and is currently State Youth Director for the South Australian Baptist Churches and a lecturer at Burleigh Theological College. He was formerly the youth pastor at Crossway Baptist Church in Melbourne and a Chaplain for Methodist Ladies College in Mallacoota.

If Baby Boomers are the generation born after the Second World War (say 1946-1966) and Gen X are their kids (1966-1986), then Millennials are those kids born post-1986. They are loosely called Millennials because they are the first generation to enter high school in the new millennium.

And Millennials are radically different to each of the previous generations. Products of a post-Christian society, few of them have any knowledge about anything vaguely biblical. This was highlighted recently when a 16-year-old taught me that Christmas was the celebration of Santa's birth!

Characteristics

Like all teenage generations, Millennials are full of contradictions. They conduct

relationships comfortably and regularly through technology (SMS, chat rooms and email). They are used to short grabs of information due to television and video clips. They probably don't know who Paul Keating is but they know who Bill Clinton is (which highlights the influence of US culture). Though highly suspicious of consumerism, they are prone to it, unwittingly, because of a need to conform through image. They probably have more disposable income than many adults!

For Millennials, truth is generally based in experience, not tradition or theory. They are highly individualistic and yet tribal. Lots of them grew up alone while their parents were at work or not in the house at all. That may be why they crave a genuine experience of community but often don't know how to stay committed in one.

There is no one dominant youth culture these days. Rather, there are well over 30 subcultures (and that's not even considering ethnic groupings) in any capital city of Australia. Most Millennials move through their teenage years considering and maybe trying different subcultures in their search for identity.

Millennials are products of a pluralistic society that has generally found Western religious expression bland and geared more towards propping up a system than communicating meaningfully to an

individual. That's why they may end up looking to Eastern traditions for spiritual answers and meaning-unless the church recognises the need to reach this important population in a relevant way.

Millennials are individuals, and don't they know it. Many are sceptical of anything that operates top-down because, for them, respect is earned through relationship. Authority doesn't work. Most of them know that their teachers and parents are not empowered to enforce discipline. Instead, Millennials want coaches and mentors. And they abhor a false emphasis on style and presentation, preferring an honest and gutsy presentation that's 'real'.

Finally, Millennials are quick. I've heard it said that an adult has 13 words or less to communicate an idea before Millennials switch off. This comes from the media and technology. Five second grabs. Their entertainment never stays still. A 30-minute sermon from one person is unlikely to be the best communication tool.

Reaching Millennials

It is possibly over 100 years since Western society has had a generation so receptive to spiritual concepts. Most of their discussions are not about whether God exists, rather which god exists.

Millennials are usually open to things beyond what can be empirically proved. They are post-moderns, after all. Their standard points of divergence from the Christian faith are the hypocrisy of some religious figures (that authority thing again), their consumer approach (which can blind Millennials to concepts like discipleship) and their automatic predisposition to disconnect from many of the forms currently used in church services. To Millennials, many hymns are slow, agrarian folksongs that lack connection with a quick, urban, technological culture.

Virtually every time I hear a story of how a Millennial has come into a relationship with Jesus, it is due to one of two factors: a third party who displayed integrity and consistency, or an insatiable spiritual hunger that found its homecoming in the gospel message.

Modern day youth rallies and services are meaningful points where faith issues can be settled but such events are usually not the reason for conversion. And a faith decision does not mean that a Millennial will necessarily commit to a faith community-unless that community seems inclusive and relevant.

The meaningful structures through which outreach seems to work effectively are based on relationships, community, service and love-in-action. Which isn't that new. As St Francis said, "Preach the gospel always, use words only if you must."

So what are Millennials looking for? Note how relevant and timely the message and ministry of Jesus and his purposes for the church are for these post-moderns:

- They want real experience and involvement rather than passive entertainment.
- They long for intimacy and a community in which to connect and belong. They don't necessarily know how to do this but they will try their best.
- They long for a cause and a purpose. Something to live for. A mission.
- They want to be healed of the pain of their past experiences and actions in a compassionate and honest environment.
- They want to know how to live a fruitful life and what plans God has for their future.

Getting involved

In the ancient Israelite tradition, under Moses' leadership, older generations were taught to take an active interest in the next to ensure that the faith story was not forgotten (see Deuteronomy 6). Perhaps churches are missing the best in their ministry to Millennials by thinking that their youth leaders are doing that all by themselves.

Now, youth ministry is very important. However, passing on the faith to the next generation is surely one of the church's most vital challenges. It is too important to leave to youth leaders. We are all responsible. This generation needs healing relationships with older people of

the faith. Not just parents but mentors and coaches. People who are ahead on this journey called life.

There are four ways the 'ordinary' Christian can get involved. The most obvious is to befriend them. Take time to talk to the kids who hang out in the street as you wash your car. Get to know them in your church or community group. Take an interest in, the Millennials who pass by in your routine.

Secondly, offer to help with the youth ministry at your church. This could involve anything from providing transport, giving a scholarship to a youth camp, making your pool or back room available or supporting a youth leader. The possibilities are limited only by your gifts and creative thinking.

Thirdly, support or become involved with ministries that work with wider groups of churches. School chaplains, Scripture Union, Youth for Christ, Youth Alive, See You at the Pole, denominational ministries, camping groups and various secondary and tertiary student-focussed ministries all have opportunities for valued support in their ministry. These organisations can be found in the phone book or through an Internet search.

Finally, and most importantly, commit to pray. As with any kingdom work, prayer is the first and highest priority. Nothing eternal will happen without it.

We live in exciting times, with a spiritually open generation emerging. Which faith they accept and how they express it is up to the people of God. Either Australia's churches become missional and relevant or risk losing the next generation altogether. There's not much of a choice there, is there?

Delving Deeper

Books

- God at the Mall... Youth Ministry That Meets Kids Where They're At, Pete Ward. Hendrickson, 2001. ISBN: 156563411X
- Post-modern Youth Ministry, Tony Jones. Zondervan, 2001. ISBN: 031023817X
- Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture, George Barna. Regal, 2001. ISBN: 0830726632

- Saving the Millennial Generation, Dawson McAllister. Nelson, 1999. ISBN: 0785282963

Websites

www.btmc.org.uk/altworship/links.htm

www.ymaus.org

www.xplorethecause.com

www.cys-ministry.org

Finding Jesus

These are true stories of two Millennials who found Jesus. Their names have been changed to protect their privacy but the stories are told with permission.

Troy's story: amazing forgiveness

At 16, Troy had tried and done more than many adults. He grew up in a family that communicated as little as possible. His mum and dad worked long hours as their way of providing for their kids' future.

While very likable, Troy was the sort of child who was always in trouble. "All I was trying to do was find out who I was and where I could belong," he commented wryly.

Troy's search led him to a group of friends on the same journey. He was accepted, but into a group who were experimenting with illicit substances. A year later, things were going wrong in the group. So, when Troy stole money from his friend Josh to buy some speed, nothing seemed unusual. Until Josh died in a car accident the next week.

The death of a friend at such a young age shocked Troy deeply. But he was equally shocked by his inability to make things right with his friend and return the money.

The one person who had been a consistent presence for Troy was his school chaplain, a 23-year-old, who was able to guide Troy into a new community of people who were real and honest about their own shortcomings but who had experienced this gap in their own lives covered by Jesus. Troy's biggest challenge now is how to stay in touch with his old friends without getting back into their habits,

Wen Li: hungry for the truth

Wen Li was eight when she left Asia to be adopted by an Australian couple. She made friends quite easily, due to her outgoing and likeable personality. Her family never went to church and could be described as 'moderately against' Christianity.

When Wen Li was 14, her family was watching a film about the Christmas story on TV. It was only meant as light entertainment, but Wen Li was transfixed. She had to know more about who this Jesus was. Her parents were no help, and her church-governed school didn't seem to offer any guidance.

Wen Li did know that her neighbours went to a church and they had always been friendly to her. They loaned her the Jesus video, which tells the gospel account of Jesus' life and ministry. That did it! Wen Li was a convert to Jesus and prayed alone to dedicate her life to following him after watching the video half-a-dozen times.

Wen Li's parents were furious that she had this interest and banned her from watching the video or joining a church. Wen Li knows of five other Christians at her school and they are her church! She dreams one day of being allowed to go to church with other Christians.

How To Find Fitzroy Falls Conference Centre

Fitzroy Falls Christian Conference Centre

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