

Maegan's Testimony

My name is Maegan Choate. I'm 15 years old and a sophomore at Nixa High School. I have been going to Redeemer all of my life, and this year is my 5th year being a part of youth. Through youth I have been fortunate enough to do so many amazing things. I have attended Camp Chi Rho every year as a kid, and this year was my first year on staff, which was an amazing opportunity. Last summer I went to the National Youth Gathering and that was such a thrilling experience. All of those things were absolutely great and have had such a great impact on my faith journey, but what seems to have made the biggest impact on my life is Youth Group every Sunday night.

Youth Group is one thing that stays consistent in my life. No matter how hard my week was before, I know that I will end my week having a fulfilling time. We always start each week with games and fellowship with one another, and then go into Bible Study before resuming games.

At youth we have an abundance of beyond amazing adults. From Hannah Hayden whose devotions always seem to relate to my life and who is always there with an open door to listen, to Alicia who graciously volunteers her time each week to come hang out with us and puts up with all of our shenanigans. And you cannot forget about Ms. Marilyn, whose hugs seem to fix all of your life problems.

One of the biggest lessons that I have learned in youth is about the fall into sin in Genesis. Studying this reminds me that yes, the world is broken, and so are our families, friendships, and people, but God has mercy on His people and is loving and caring. God's love is the focus of the story, not Adam and Eve's sin. In our own lives our sins, worries, anxieties, guilt, and shame is not the theme and should not be our main focus. The love of God is. Because of God's mercy and grace, He puts friendships in our lives that show His love. The

thing that makes the Youth Group so amazing to me is the relationship we all have with each other, which reflects God's love.

At Youth, it is not the games and activities that make it such a wonderful time, it is the people and how they make me feel. From being in Youth I have made amazing friends that I know will always be there for me no matter what. At Youth, we are all really close friends and enjoy hanging out and being around one another both in and outside of church. We all have our own different and distinct personalities that we get to showcase at Youth each week without fear of being judged.

Over the past years, I have gotten so close with all the people there and it has been one of the greatest joys of my life. It is a place where I have no doubt in my mind that I belong. What makes friendships at Youth so special is that there are no cliques. We are all just a big group of friends, which as teens is especially hard to find. We might not have the same opinions, personality etc... but we all have one thing in common and that is our love and need for Jesus. It is so great to have such great Christian friends that I know will always be praying for me. They truly are one of the greatest blessings in my life.

Whether I recognize it or not, Youth is preparing me for future events in my life and is shaping me as a person. This summer was an especially busy summer for Youth, but man was it so much fun. From volunteering at VBS and Camp Chi Rho, to going to regular Youth Group and participating in Youth Week at Camp Okoboji; I learned so much about myself, my morals, and the person that I can be. Before this summer I was starting to question my faith and the things I believed, but through many different Youth events this summer I'm more secure with those things. Youth has allowed me to open up to the people around me, and has helped me know that I'm truly loved and accepted. I always know that if I'm ever going through something that I have a group of girls from youth that will just sit there with me and show me just how loved I am.

Although I didn't know it at the time, Youth Group really prepared me for how tough the past two months of my life have been. I know without a doubt that all of us Youth kids were supporting each other all the way, and I would not be the person I am today without them.

This summer when we were at Camp Okoboji there was this absolutely beautiful and powerful place called The Point. There we had a campfire, had a devotion, sang, and prayed. While we were there, we sang this song called "Friends" and each time we sang it, I cried my heart out. It talked about thanking God for all of our friends, and the lyrics to that song have really stuck with me. Each night at The Point we ended with prayer, leaving at different times when we finished. Myself and a group of girls from Youth would sit there individually praying, and holding each other tight. We were all there for each other. We had no idea what each of us was going through or struggling with, but we knew that we were not alone in this big confusing world. And moments like that with the girls at youth have had the biggest impact on me and my faith journey.

One thing that I hope the whole congregation can take out of this testimony is something that Hannah once said, "The youth are not the future of the Church, but the current Church in action". I am so glad to be a part of this amazing Youth Group with such special and meaningful people. After long days, I always look forward to seeing the kids there. I hope we all continue to make more amazing memories together. It is always so fun when we play games and get a bit competitive, or when we laugh so hard we nearly cry, or when we sing a bunch of camp tunes way off key. Redeemer Youth has been such a blessing in my, and so many others' lives and I am so grateful for this amazing ministry that we have here at Redeemer.