

New York City Trip Update

As many of you know, we journeyed to Manhattan Christian Academy with a team of 18 people, mostly college students, for our first school of 2014. The middle school theme focused on God as our heavenly Father, while the elementary theme was “Hello My Name Is” based on the Matthew West song. Here are some pictures, reflections by a few team members, a sample of questions we were asked, and some statements by the middle schoolers about what they learned.



15 of our 18 team members

Katie Conrad:

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you who believe.” – 1 Thessalonians 2:13

This past week, at Manhattan Christian Academy, I witnessed the godly love of the staff, the students, and my fellow team members. Together we journaled with the eighth-graders, led chapel for the middle-school and elementary kids, supported the basketball teams, taught classes, shared our testimonies, and mentored youth in their spiritual walks. We were also ministered to by the staff, the students, and others who were willing to dedicate their time, money, and delicious cooking (shout out to Mr. and Mrs. Hall, Miss Woodmansee, and Ms. Campbell) to our ministry! We loved the students and they loved us, but more importantly, we all learned a lot about the love of our Heavenly Father who bestows so many gracious blessings on us daily, who protects and defends us against our enemies and never leaves our sides. We also shared a lot of laughs and heart-warming moments with each other and with the students. Some of us will probably never forget when Dr. Brady stood up in the middle of “Coffee Can” to read Jonah 4:7 to the class! We will also remember the kind and sincere words shared one evening when we spent a couple hours building each other up and encouraging each other. It was a tiring week of hard work and emotional exhaustion, and it was a huge blessing to everyone involved.



The individual interactions are just as important as the large group times.

Stephanie Albert: *I have always been quiet in new environments, but I learned from last year going on this trip that the kids just want to talk to the people on the team! So this year, I was determined to connect with the kids on day one. I had an amazing time and really got to know kids and pour my heart into having relationships with them this year. God helped me overcome my timidity to accomplish his desires for this week. I felt used by God in every moment with the kids. I was able to share stories, lessons I have learned, joke with them, encourage them, and be a role model they can up look to. I had so much fun and believe that God can use anyone for anything. I think of it as a Moses moment for myself.*



Several of our team members were education majors. Megan had the opportunity to teach a 2nd grade lesson!

Adrienne Scrima:

Coastlands Consultants provided me with the incredible opportunity to join the MCA

Spiritual Emphasis Team. Awesome satisfaction came through working together with the team to serve our God. I will never forget how the experience was simply saturated in the presence of God.

We reap what we sow, and the reward came in many forms. The students blessed our team with their joy and openness. A question and answer time in a fifth grade classroom turned into group prayer for a hurting classmate. An altar call revealed the hearts of some students desperate to transform their lives. A student open-mic time proved to us that the lessons we taught with urgency were gently understood and applied.

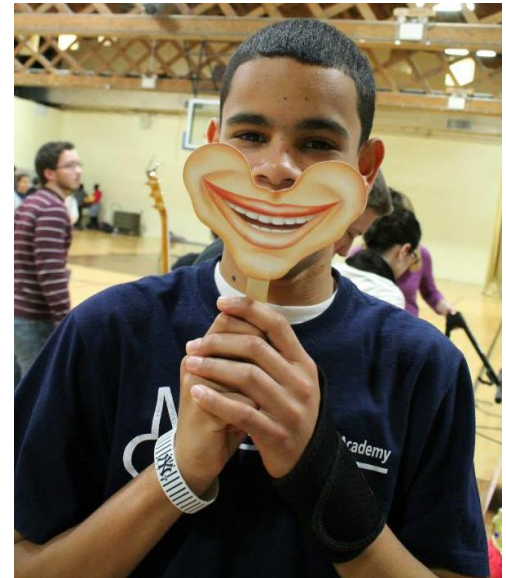
I also must mention my gratitude for the unforgettable encouragement from the team and the students. God spoke to me through these amazing relationships that were built so quickly. The Spiritual Emphasis Week left me with a desire to continuously let God emphasize Himself in my life.

Some middle school questions asked during Q&A time...

- *“In any time in your life were you depressed? Why? How did you resolve it?”*
- *“If you sin frequently, does that affect whether God answers your prayers? Do you have to be as good as possible for God to work in your life? What are the chances of God working in my life?”*
- *“What do you do when you have a ‘mean’ stepmom and you try to tell your dad but he doesn’t listen to you?”*
- *“Are people born gay?”*
- *“I’ve been bullied before but I can’t feel better. What do I do?”*
- *“I have a friend who might be pregnant. What should I tell her because she asks me all the time how I feel etc.?”*
- *And my personal favorite... “Does Mr. Huffman look like Eli Manning? Just a little to me.”*

A sample of what students said they learned...

- *"God is always there."*
- *"God disciplines us because He loves us."*
- *"God is always by your side."*
- *"Humans' love is no match for God's great love."*
- *"Don't depend on something, but depend on God."*
- *"Trust God through a traumatic experience."*
- *"All things are possible through God."*
- *"When something rude is said to you, you can say something nice back."*
- *"Give God your worries."*
- *"Let God change your heart and change you into who He wants you to be."*
- *"Tear down my façade."*
- *"I need to change my potty mouth."*
- *"His love never fails."*
- *"Even when you feel alone, He is there."*
- *"Be honest with God."*
- *"If you ask Him to change you, He will."*



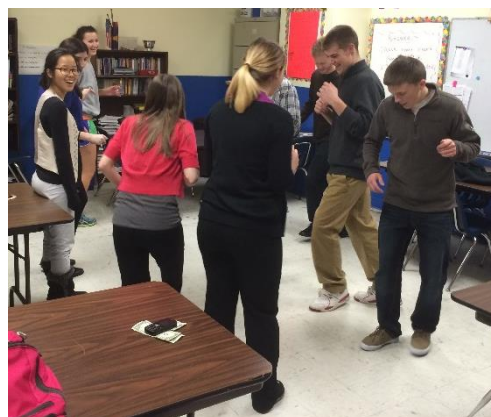
"Smile on a Stick": We challenged the students to be real and not wear facades.



We always love the students' enthusiasm at MCA!



Duck, duck, goose!



Evening dance lessons with Jake! 😊