

Effective Ministry Model -- Open Door: Released-time Education

It is easy to become paralyzed with the intensifying needs of our culture and fatigued with the accelerating rate of change. We are flooded with ministry models and appeals, inviting us to meet those needs and address those changes. Like the child offering Jesus his five loaves and two fish, we ask, “Where can my available time and money go the furthest and deepest for You?”

Yes, we are one of those ministry invitations. With volunteers from local churches, our program operates Bible classes, held once weekly, for public school students with parent permission through the Oregon Parent’s Rights Law (ORS 339.420) And we invite you to consider why this “way of doing outreach” is uniquely effective and might be the place where Jesus would multiply *your* “lunch.”

The reason our program changes lives is not because of implementing new paradigms but relying on “structures” in which God has invested power in all generations: the Scripture, the Gospel, the Local Church, and Discipleship.

Scripture-centered. Most people came to Jesus for practical help, healing or feeding, but not for saving and freeing from sin. And that’s still part of our lostness today: we don’t go looking for a Savior; He comes looking for us! Until His *Word* acts-over-our-hearts by His Holy Spirit, we are content with much less than *transformation*.

At PREP4Kids we get to teach that Word, and largely to unchurched youth, through this remarkable, singular legal avenue for religious instruction during the school day. So, it’s our privilege to “lead with” the Word of God and watch Jesus reveal Himself, touching a whole range of needs, whether His text is *Deuteronomy* or *John*. Our *teachers* often become the *servants* in many practical needs of students and families, schools and staffs, because God opens doors beyond the teaching. By contrast, many outreach models that lead with service are never extended the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Gospel-centered: Common *event-centered evangelistic outreaches* function without two key elements often vital to a sustained walk with Christ following a salvation decision: (1) background in the Scripture to really understand the decision being made and (2) background of trust relationship with the party presenting the Gospel invitation. Our curriculum is intentional in building the life framework of a truly Christian worldview, explaining human history as God’s story. Student faith decisions are made without pressure as they come to understand what life-lived-with-God looks like, fleshed out in New and Old Testament believers, from Genesis to Revelation, and in the lives of our volunteers.

Church-connected: Our program relies on the local church to open their facilities and mobilize volunteer teams, supported by our oversight, training, and materials. School networks remain the hub of our communities and the strategic connection to families. Operating a PREP class is a church opportunity to expand contact and extend availability within the community.

Old-school Mentoring & Discipleship: Jesus modeled discipleship with a small nucleus in a remote geographic staging area. Today, in a technology-driven youth culture of virtual relationships and fractured family systems, the consistent, personal relationships with our volunteers become powerful stabilizers for PREP students, sometimes forging relationships enduring into their adulthood. The caliber and commitment of PREP volunteers is **exceptional**. Across denominational lines, sometimes in blended-church teams, our volunteers are a living demonstration of the unified Body of Christ. The quality of the curriculum and the seriousness of our weekly teaching commitment require significant investment on the part of our volunteers. To a one, they would testify that their passion *begins* with their love for Christ but *intensifies* with their interaction in the general hardships and unbelievable difficulties characterizing children’s lives in our time.

Like Peter hauling in fish when He *put the nets where Jesus pointed*, these four power ingredients of PREP4Kids are simply the “nets” that Jesus has given His fishers of men. We would love to arrange a visit to one of our classes or a conversation about where you might join our corner of the Great Commission!

PREP4Kids is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1984, governed by a Board of Directors, serving Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties: prepoffice@gmail.com, 503.281.7764, prep4kids.org.