

## The Need to be Intentional

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I believe that Seventh-day Adventist schools do an excellent job of teaching students about Christ. They also provide a variety of opportunities for students to develop their relationship with Christ. Despite this good record, I still find myself wondering, “should we be more intentional in our plans to invite decisions for Christ?” In her book, *Education*, Ellen White writes, “the teacher’s first effort and constant aim [should be] to aid the student in comprehending [the character of God], and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life (p. 13).”



As the 2010/11 school year began, Kingsway’s administrative team sat down with our chaplain to contemplate and pray about our mission statement, “*To reflect Jesus Christ and prepare students for His service.*” As we considered how this might be accomplished, one statistic continued to trouble us: only twelve students in the last three years had made decisions for baptism. This was simply unacceptable to us, so we began formulating plans to create an environment that would intentionally encourage students to make decisions for Christ.

Stepping out in faith, we boldly scheduled a baptism for the Sabbath of graduation. Next, we launched a plan to promote spiritual growth with the specific intention of attaining decisions for Christ. Our Spiritual Growth Plan included the implementation of three things: Power Weekends, Weeks of Prayer, and Bible Study/Baptismal classes.

The first part of our Spiritual Growth Plan was to schedule a unique Power Weekend each month. These weekends were to be a spiritual highlight for students, encouraging personal spiritual growth. Each weekend was packed with spiritual programming, including Friday night vespers, Sabbath school, Chapel church, and sundown worship. A youth-friendly speaker was invited to discuss current topics *and issues* that directly impact Christian teens today. Speakers challenged students’ traditional ways of thinking, urging them to re-examine their spiritual walk and deepen their personal commitment to Christ.

The second part of our Spiritual Growth Plan examined the traditional scheduling of our Weeks of Prayer. Like most schools, we held two a year—one in the fall, and one in the spring. With spiritual growth specifically in mind, we increased this number to three, and assigned a specific goal to each. Our first Week of Prayer was held mid-October with the goal of interesting students in Bible study. At the end of the week, students were given the opportunity to give their hearts to Christ. This led to the implementation of the third part of our Spiritual Growth Plan—Bible Study Classes.

A Bible Study schedule was set up and students were encouraged to sign up and participate. Students were allowed to miss one hour of work each week to attend Bible study. If faithful in attendance, they were also given credit for working the hour they were at the study. To accommodate the varied class schedules of students, Bible studies were offered at three separate times each week—morning, afternoon and evening. This way, every student could find time to participate regardless of class or work demands.

Meanwhile... our second Week of Prayer was held in February, and in keeping with past tradition, all speakers were members of Kingsway's senior class. The goal of this week was to provide students with the vital opportunity of witnessing to each other and to deepen each student's spiritual walk through testimony and sharing. Our third and final Week of Prayer was held in April with the goal of getting students interested in baptismal classes. Like Bible study classes, students who participated in these classes were allowed to miss an hour of work each week, and could choose between morning, afternoon or evening classes.

At the end of the year, we celebrated with twelve baptisms at our graduation service! In addition, ten more students requested baptism during the summer at their home church! I pray for God's continued blessing on our young people and challenge others to be intentional in their spiritual planning as well.

*“Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps... gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” John 4:35-36, NKJV*