

Happy New Year Middle School Volunteers! These are the volunteer announcements for the week of Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

The theme for this Wednesday is Sunglasses Night, and right at the beginning of the night, we'll allow you just about five minutes for a real brief small group check-in. Really, this time is for you to take attendance so that you know which students from your small group are present that night. If we wait until the end of the night to do any small group time, you sometimes don't have any idea who's there. So that really short small group time, I know it doesn't lead to great quality interaction because it's so short there at the beginning of the night with your small group, but the purpose is really just for you to know who is there to empower you to be a more effective leader to know which students to be pursuing and keeping an eye out for them throughout the rest of the night.

Then we'll move into game time boys are going to play dodgeball in the gym and girls are going to play a version of Scattergories out in the café.

A little update about the VCC gym: Due to some construction glitches related to make room, the east side of the gym floor, that's the further side of the gym floor, is needing to be replaced because of some water damage. So basically that means for this Wednesday and next Wednesday the east side of the gym is going to be off limits for game time and for small group time.

So that means girls, you will all have to find a space to meet on the west side of the gym. I know that's less than ideal. Thankfully, that's only going to be the case for the next two Wednesdays.

We're kicking off a three-week series about wisdom. It's called Cheat Codes, kind of how wisdom is like a cheat code to help guide us through life and Keri Early is going to be teaching this Wednesday night. Keri's got a lot of experience teaching middle school students and she has a lot of wisdom so herself so I'm grateful that she's going to be kicking off the series.

And then we will have an extended small group time for you to do some catching up just on life updates and then breaking down Keri's message with your small

group toward the end of the night.

If you have not done so please rsvp for the winter blast retreat. It's January 24 through 26 at hidden acres. Check-in is at 5 p.m on Friday we return at 12:30 p.m on Sunday. I will not know where we are staying until the week of winter blast but guys and girls will be in separate buildings. And Brandon Early, our very own, is going to be the speaker. And I believe the worship band is from Stonebridge Church in Cedar Rapids. So looking forward to a great weekend at Winter Blast. We're going to plan some new things, some new games, new activities, just to kind of freshen things up. We're also going to be able to have our large group chapel sessions in the brand new Airnasium. So that's a brand new facility where we're going to all gather together. We're expecting about 350 people total from 10 to 15 churches for this event. So looking forward to Winter Blast. I hope you can join us! We value your presence there so we will pay the full amount for you to be at Winter Blast.

For my leader encouragement, I just wanted to share a thought about a parable of Jesus. Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, and if I'm being honest, I've never held a mustard seed in my hand, but what I know is that it's very small, and if you plant a mustard seed in the ground, it grows very slowly, almost imperceptibly until it grows into this giant, giant tree. And that is how the kingdom of God works, and I think that's how God works in your life and in the lives of students. God is working slowly in you and in students. Sometimes it's so slow that we don't notice it as it's happening, but let's have faith and trust that God is faithful and he's working in us and working in students, even though sometimes it's slower than we want, and sometimes it doesn't happen in the time frame that we think it should. God is at work in you, and as he's working in you, he's using you to do his work in middle schoolers. So thanks for being a part of that work in students' lives. We'll see you this Wednesday night!