



Dear Grace Vineyard Revolution Parent:

I want to thank you for supporting your teen's participation in World Vision's 30 Hour Famine. Through the Famine, your son or daughter will play an active role in fighting world hunger and helping save kids' lives.

To help you and your son/daughter get the most out of the 30 Hour Famine, we will be providing them with a Student Guide that's filled with information about the event, World Vision's work, and more. In addition I'd like to highlight a few important points you as a parent may want to know.

World Vision is a Christian relief and development organization dedicated to helping children and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus, we serve the poor as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people. We serve the world's poor – regardless of a person's religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. More information about World Vision can be found online at www.worldvision.org.

World Vision's 30 Hour Famine started in the U.S. 17 years ago as a way for junior high, high school and college-age students to help save – and change – children's lives. By going without food for 30 hours and raising money to help needy children, young people gain a deeper awareness of the needs in our world and realize that they can play a vital role in making a difference.

During their 30 hours, students go without food (but can drink plenty of water and juice) to experience true hunger and learn powerful lessons of compassion for those who live with hunger daily. The average, healthy teenager is able to go without food for 30 hours without any ill effects. Exceptions include children under the age of 12; the elderly; pregnant or nursing women; people with specific medical conditions including diabetes, hypoglycemia or eating disorders. If you have any health-related questions about fasting, we strongly advise you consult your family doctor prior to participation. It is not required that students fast from food in order to participate in the 30 Hour Famine and your student's leader can help identify alternatives to fasting from food. More information on fasting and the 30 Hour Famine can be found at www.30hourfamine.org.

The students will be starting their fast after lunch on Friday, May 15th, and will be coming to the church for a lock-in at 7PM that evening. This year we will actually be having a lock-out, where the students will be building their own villages outside in order to experience for one night what many of the people they are helping experience every day. This sounds a little scary, but this has been done successfully by many youth groups already, and is being done by over 100 churches in the US alone this year. Guys and girls will be completely separated during sleeping hours, and the whole area will be guarded at all times by 6 adult men. Arlington PD will also be helping to keep the area safe and secure. Please don't hesitate to read more about the event at www.GraceRevolution.org, or to contact me at 817-640-4588. Thank you!

A Few Other Changes

At the same time as we are doing all of this with the 30 Hour Famine, we will be using this opportunity to make some major changes to the structure of our youth group. These changes are big, and will affect everyone in Revolution. None of this is sudden. We have been looking forward to this for the past few years, and waiting until the time is right, and we believe that time is now. But let me first explain the picture that we are looking at right now, before I detail these changes, so you will understand what brought them about. I don't want to speak cryptically. I just want to work together in making sure our students grow and thrive in Christ.

For the last few years our group has been on a pretty significant growth curve. We have had periods of rapid growth, followed by plateaus, and then more growth. At no point in the last few years has our group size decreased. That is not at all typical in youth ministries. There are often decreases in group size at times, which is something that we expected, but it just never happened. It is relatively easy to slowly increase group size. It is spiritual growth that is more of a challenge.

One of the keys to fostering spiritual growth (our whole purpose, along with evangelism) is to focus on small groups. This has been increasingly happening, and with good results. Still, there have been hindrances to making this happen at the level that our leaders' have envisioned. First, our group size has grown to the point where it is difficult to grow to much further within the space of the Revolution Room. That growth cap does play a factor into the spiritual dynamic of the group. With the room full it is easy for noise to be a factor, and it just feels full. Fifty people is a lot! Also, with so many students at once it has become increasingly more difficult to minister to each one effectively. Frankly, sometimes it is frustrating to the High Schoolers who would love to be having an in-depth discussion on scripture, when we are having to correct Junior Highers for doing the kind of things that Junior Highers do.

That brings up a more intricate issue. Junior Highers have very specific needs and issues to address, as do High Schoolers. This isn't just Bible study/discipleship in nature, but even the way they play, the type of worship, and the character of the group that makes them feel most comfortable.

We have tried to answer this by splitting up our group during the teaching time. But that isn't really a good answer to the challenge. We don't have the resources (mostly physical space) to separate them completely on a Wednesday night, and that only solves the teaching time issues. We are still space restricted.

So, the most obvious solution is to do what most youth groups of our size do, and split the Junior High and High School groups into completely separate nights. We will be doing this starting on the week of May 18th. The exact details of which groups would be on which nights are not completely determined yet. Frankly, we would like your feedback on this. Further, there are myriad details that must be worked out for this to happen properly, and these are starting to all fall into place. We do know that this will take some adjustment for families. There are families that have teens in both groups. We do know that to ask families to drive to church on 2 different nights could cause unneeded stress, and we don't want to do that. We will be putting in place a ride share program to help parents in this situation. We also want to address any other thoughts or concerns you have regarding this.

In order to help answer all questions, and communicate all the details of this appropriately, we have set up a **Parent's Meeting on April 29th, at 6:15 PM**. This is the same night as Grace Vineyard's Leadership Community. Those of you who are a part of that gathering will have no problem attending both, as we will end before that begins at 7. It will also mean that you won't have to drive here on a separate night. There will be no Revolution on that night, as it is already Leadership Community night and Revolution is cancelled accordingly. Dinner will be provided. All of the Revolution team members will be at that meeting, and will be happy to share with you their thoughts concerning this, as well.

We do ask that you please **RSVP** for this as soon as possible. You may do this through the comment card provided, or by clicking on the event at the top of the page at www.GraceRevolution.org. Please call Grace Vineyard at 817-640-4588, or email me at youth@gvcf.org with any questions.

Grace and Peace to you,

Ryan Shinn
Youth Pastor, Grace Vineyard