

From the contributing author, Megan Hutchinson, to Youth Workers who care:

Dear Youth Workers,

THANK YOU for having a heart that cares for hurting kids. They need you—they need us—to stack hands together and dare to go where most churches won't—to the heart of their pain. I admire your courage to take this on. It's draining and overwhelming, yet rewarding and worthwhile at the same time. This LHGH Ministry Kit was written in response to your many questions. It was your questions which forced me to create what you now have in your hands—truly life changing resource for kids who hurt. What a privilege and honor to come along side them in their pain. If there is a higher calling . . . I want to know about it (by the way, I've been doing this for 15 years and have yet to find one)!

Listen to what one shared with my Life Hurts God Heals small group recently:

"Tonight we had our Life Hurts God Heals graduation ceremony. Twenty-five students showed, and of those, fifteen 'graduated' and received a certificate of completion."

It gets better.

Tonight's step, Step 8 was: *Share with Others. I will take the message that God heals to others in need and share it by my words and actions.*

Knowing this, I had asked five students to prepare and share how LHGH has helped them through their hurt, behaviors, etc. As you know, there is nothing as powerful as a testimony and every one of them did an incredible job. Afterwards, I opened it up to whoever wanted to share.

It gets even better.

Erin showed up. This is the reeeeeallllly angry Erin who said the "F" word several times, wore all black, wouldn't look you in the eyes, sits in the back of the tent and writes on her shoe during service. Yes, that one has faithfully shown her face in my small group for the past 13-weeks. Tonight, after the selected shared, she nudged me asking, "Can I share?" Reluctantly, and with a bit of fear for what she'd say, I said "sure."

She gets up, with a lapel microphone hooked up to her and all, looks at the group *in the eyes* and shares, "My dad was in the military when I was little and when I was 'bad', he made me do push-ups. If I couldn't do them correctly—he would get angry and aggressive physically with me. Eventually, I began to fight back, which made it (the abuse) worse. He even forced me to watch horror movies. As you can imagine, I grew up with a ton of anger, but I also kept it all inside. I didn't want anyone to get close to me—no one. I am agnostic, but my mom comes to Saddleback. I found myself in Life Hurts God Heals and for the first time in my life, I found a place to be who I am without holding back, just me, *and it's at a church*. I don't really know what else to say, but I'm glad I'm here."

You know, tonight I was reminded why I do this crazy thing called youth ministry. Why I put up with the angry looks, the late night phone calls (when I'd rather be in bed) and the (huge) lack appreciation . . . it's for people like Erin, who needed to know that "sanctuary" exists. That we youth workers will see in her what she can not see for herself and that God is big enough to carry her even though she doesn't (yet) know—it's Him.

Can it get any better?

It always can! When students see themselves as “Saul”—we see Paul; when they see the “woman at the well”—we see the first missionary. Life Hurts God Heals does that. It helps them see beyond themselves to what they can become. It’s for the Erin’s . . .

Life Hurts God Heals just got better. May the tools you use in the Ministry Kit help heal your student’s wounds.

From one wounded healer to the next,

Megan

P.S. Please let me know if you have questions or comments as you journey along this Life Hurts God Heals road: megan@simplyyouthministry.com