

The WAY Extreme – an explanation for youth leaders

Thank you for your interest in the WAY. This event started as a night game for our summer camp, named after the first title given to Christians (Acts 9:2). It was developed by Phil Horning, a former program director. Because of its popularity, about a decade ago it was expanded to a youth night.

The basic premise of the event is that your youth group are members of an underground church. You are meeting fellow believers for a service under the cover of darkness, and need to move from station to station. However, there are guards on the prowl, as you are out past curfew. If/when you are spotted by the guards, they will question you and bring you to jail for interrogation as a group. Guards will ask questions about why you believe what you believe. The guards are staffed by summer staff and alumni, and are trained in what questions to ask and how to ask them. There is some intimidation by design, but done in a responsible and safe way. The event ends with a candlelight service with the whole group, followed by refreshments and group debrief.

The outcomes for youth are two-fold. First, the event encourages youth to consider that many Christians do not have the freedoms that we do in America- a new concept for some- and helps them experience a taste of this reality. We are careful to note that this game is just that- a game. In no way are we trying to pretend that this is close to real life, and there are real Christians in real countries that need our prayer and support. Second, the questions asked by guards are meant to challenge their faith and give opportunity to respond. This is done in a safe context, where real questions that may be difficult to answer can be debriefed afterwards.

We have found the WAY to be an exciting event that is both fun and faith-stimulating. It also is a great opportunity to meet other youth groups. Hope this helps answer some of your questions! And feel free to email us at adam@woodcrestretreat.org if you want to dialogue about it as well.

God Bless,

Woodcrest Leadership team