

“Follow the Leader”

City Kids

Teach Kids article....

M/J 2006

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“Let’s play --- Follow the Leader!” Many kids still shout this in classrooms and on playgrounds today. Remember when you played? Everybody wanted to have an opportunity to be the leader.

Unfortunately, many city kids only get to play this game and rarely actually become productive leaders. Most parents and teachers are more concerned with kids making positive choices than making godly decisions. Those ministering in the city are competing with street gangs for kids’ bodies, minds, and spirits. The question is always --- Who will overcome? City kids are constantly given the opportunity to become leaders in gangs or on athletic teams, but does anyone care if these kids honor God with their lives as a leader or a follower?

If you agree with me that this is more than a valid question, it is in fact the essential question; then how do you develop city kids into devoted disciples for Christ? How can kids surrounded with ungodly influences have the greatest opportunity to become what God has planned for them?

Remember, this is a work of God over a lifetime, but here is how it is being accomplished in Spencer’s life who is 17 years old. He is a high school junior who was reached on a city street at age 12. His development may take 15 years of investment by a parent, a church, and/or a Christian mentor.

These are the things that have proved to be successful over the past five years in leadership development and Spencer becoming a devoted disciple of Christ. Others and myself had the opportunity and privilege to:

- o Be regularly visible on his street, visiting, connecting with his home
- o Share the Gospel and counsel him for salvation
- o Allow he and his family to attend organized community and church events
- o Spend concentrated personal time with him for modeling godly behavior
- o Be completely honest and transparent about everything with each other
- o Show practical love for him and inquisitively learn from him
- o Personally disciple him through study and being paired in ministry outreach
- o Allow him to serve on a mission team, then as an intern, perhaps full-time service
- o Always, but gradually ‘raising the bar’ of expectation and accountability
- o Give him space and intentionally separate myself from him for a week or month
- o Allow him to succeed and fail on his own

After 5 years the development is not complete, but Spencer is involved in church-based and CEF ministry in the city where he lives. He still has rough edges and does not always get it right, but his heart desires to please the Lord and serve Him.