

Ascension Lutheran Church
5820 West Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90043



From July 22nd to 26th 2019, Ascension brought back a ministry, which had not been active for quite some time, called Holy Ground. Under the direction of FreXinet Johnson and the support of Ascension members, a pilot program for the camp was created however, there was a new twist! Previously, the program emphasized sports and outdoor activities. While we held fast to the outdoor elements of Holy Ground, we focused this run of the camp on the arts.

Holy Ground Summer Arts Youth Camp was created to give youth (ages 7-13) in our city a safe place to express themselves in healthy and creative ways. This also serves as a place for young people to hone the skills they have a passion for. We offer lessons in acting, singing/vocal performance, dancing and arts and crafts.

The arts offer great ways for young people to build their self-esteem, enhance their self-discipline, create community identity, combat mental health issues, and develop leadership qualities. We wish to not only offer these things to the youth that attend our camp, but to also instill them in our adolescences and young adults that volunteer as leaders. Holy Ground functions as a community service opportunity for our older youth (ages 14-18) and young adults who are interested. This creates a chance for a great range of young people to let their gifts shine by pouring into our community's youth, while lessening negative effects created by generational gaps.

Our team was able to acquire quite a few youth from the neighborhood to attend our Holy Ground Pilot 2019. Our goal was to obtain 25 attendees. My full roster consisted of 27 participants; goal met. We averaged 16 participants each day. Rev. Jonathan Hemphill, pastor of Ascension Lutheran, LA and Another Level Ministries, connected me to associates in youth ministry to lead our dance and singing workshops. Dr. Chanel Green taught our campers dance and Franchesca White taught singing and vocal performance. Johnson led our acting and arts and crafts sessions. Each instructor created their own lesson plans but collaborated on some of the content to be showcased. We could not have had a better staff. These women were not only astute in their crafts and teaching skills but personable with our campers. It was evident the young people enjoyed their time with them.

Overall, Holy Ground 2019 was an absolute success. Our camp's theme was "The Power of I Am." All of our activities, crafts and even songs, promoted consciousness and positivity. We believe this helped the participants' self-esteem and enthusiasm throughout the camp. The camp culminated with a showcase for family and friends which displayed all the art, songs and skills they worked on throughout the week. Our campers did an amazing job in their presentation. Our older teen leaders gained experience with setting up work stations, prepping food, and practiced a variety of administrative assistant duties, in addition to earning community service hours. They also gained experience working with differently abled and special needs youth.

We are proud to share our collaborative efforts with other community organizations and businesses. New City Parish, (a collection of churches within the Los Angeles Metropolitan Conference, SWCA Synod, ELCA) donated roughly \$500 worth of food for the entire week of programming. In addition, Operation Feed Everyone (OFE) sponsored registration fees for some of our campers. OFE, founded by Alexis Bell, is an organization dedicated to feeding families and individuals in need in a variety of ways. We also teamed up with Tristan's Snow Cones, who at age 10, has his own business and is saving his profits for his college education. Tristan brought his business to our showcase night. We are certain this camp made an impact on this community and are sure they will be looking for Holy Ground again in the near future.

On the next page are photos of some of the fun we had at Holy Ground Summer Arts Camp 2019.

"...for the place where you are standing is Holy Ground." Ex. 3:5b
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