

Lovin' Life's Winter High-School Workshop Opens Its Doors to Kids Across the Nation

Ariana Moon
December 5, 2011



"The Shoulders We Stand On," was the theme of the high-school summer workshop at Barrytown, N.Y. Camp staff: (far left, bottom) Toby Gullery, (center, bottom) David Hunter, (far right, bottom) Ester Allen.

After two years of serving the New York and New Jersey communities, Winter Charge, Lovin' Life Ministries' high-school winter workshop, is opening its doors to the entire nation. This program will take place from December 27, 2011 to January 1, 2012 at both the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) and at the Manhattan Center. Pastor David Hunter, MC for Lovin' Life Ministries and the Director of the Winter Charge, provides familyfed.org details about the fast-approaching and well-anticipated workshop.



Just hanging around during a break.

"We're calling the workshop the Winter Charge rather than a Winter Retreat because we're not retreating, but charging forward," said Hunter. "For the first time, under In Jin Nim's vision and authority, the invitation is open to all high-school students across the country. Even international students are welcome – we already have someone registered from Canada. There are about 50 kids registered right now, many of them kids who had attended the first national Lovin' Life Summer Camp this past summer, and we are expecting about 120. The door is wide open at Lovin' Life Ministries, because it's not just a local ministry – it's a national one."



At last year's winter workshop a team ran their flag up the tree limb just to see who would come to salute.

Winter Charge 2011: 'I Know My Roots'

“The theme for the Winter Charge is ‘I Know My Roots.’ The theme for the Lovin’ Life Summer Camp was ‘The Shoulders We Stand On,’ which was about spiritual heritage, about recognizing the people who came before us and who have made us who we are. ‘I Know My Roots’ is also about spiritual heritage, and the bulk of our time will be spent recognizing who True Parents and the True Children are.

“This workshop is much shorter than our summer camp because of the time limitation of winter break for high-school kids. Every day we’re going to have a spiritual or internal guidance lecture in the morning, and then we’re going to provide various activities throughout the day. We’ll set up challenges that relate to investigating True Father and True Mother’s life, including activities such as having the kids fundraise for a meal to understand more of what our parents went through. One of our goals is to have each of the kids go out into the community and give an autobiography to someone and talk about it. Then the kids will understand better what it means to witness.”



High-schoolers show their true colors in a group photo.

Developments of the Winter Workshop

Lovin’ Life Youth Ministry team has been hosting a winter workshop for the local congregations in New Jersey and New York for the two years. “We began to host a winter workshop in 2009, the winter after Lovin’ Life Ministries started,” Hunter said. “Jaga Gavin, a youth pastor of Lovin’ Life, and I co-directed that. It was called “Face-off.” We had about 60 kids. Then, last year, the workshop was co-directed by myself, Toby Gullery and Ester Allen, members of the youth ministry team. It was called “Facetime.”

“Now that we’re opening up to the national congregation, we have more parents involved in the Winter Charge than before. To name a few: Beverly Berndt from Maryland, who’s always been a youth-ministry advisor down there, Eva Clark from New Jersey, who’s kind of a youth-ministry mother, and the staff of the Blessed Teens Academy (a homeschooling program for young Unificationists), such as Jeri Tamayo and other parents who work with her.



"Nobody wins unless we all win" at the rope-walk challenge for teams of high-schoolers.

“Another thing Lovin’ Life is doing differently this year for our high-school winter workshop is that we’re asking kids to prepare themselves prior to the workshop. We created a participant preparation form, which has three activities that we ask them to do. The first is to write a letter to True Parents about who they are and how they feel. The second is to interview a member of the first-generation, a parent or some other first-generation they’re comfortable with, about an awesome experience he or she had with True Parents or the True Children so that the kids can develop a deeper level of understanding about True Parents. The third is to find a creative way to serve their physical parents and then to write about that experience.



"It takes a village" to build a shelter in two hours.

“Excitingly, the Winter Charge 2011 also includes the CARP Winter Ball. Even though the Ball is primarily a young-adult targeted audience, we spoke with CARP because we want everyone to have the benefit of being around this Lovin’ Life event, and they opened their arms to us. In addition to that, on December 31, 2011, there will be a Winter Festival for families at UTS. It’s Lovin’ Life’ Ministries’ alternative to New Year’s Eve, an opportunity for families to gather to have fun in a safe environment. I believe we’re even planning a fireworks show. Then on January 1, 2012, we’ll conclude the Winter Charge by going back to the city for Sunday Service. I always try to include Lovin’ Life Ministries’ Sunday Service into our youth-ministry programs – it’s so important for us to connect with the kind of

vision In Jin Nim has.”

Reflecting the Vision of Lovin’ Life Ministries

“Lovin’ Life Ministries’ vision is ‘Inheriting the True Love of God.’ But the manner in which In Jin Nim goes about that is revolutionary. It’s about having a dynamic Sunday service, having a good time and really loving life. This is different from the Sunday services we’ve had before. Lovin’ Life is more lively, more fun, more professional, sounds better, and provides deeper content.

“In all our youth-ministry activities, something we always try to emphasize is having a good time in the right environment. Part of that is training kids how to have fun in a spiritually healthy way. That’s why we need to connect to, for example, ballroom dancing. It’s a disciplined way of having a good time, where men treat women the right way and women treat men the right way.



As snug as bugs in a leaf rug in December.

“One of the things we’re also trying to do is make church a place you want to be. As a kid, I never felt that church was cool, and I never wanted to be at church. Now I’m trying to make church a home away from home for our workshop participants, somewhere they want to be. If the kids think that workshops are fun, that church is fun, then they’ll come. So we don’t, as an opposition to the old ways, emphasize classroom lectures as much. Of course we need lectures, but we don’t over-emphasize them.

Hunter added that the Winter Charge staff will and is expected to follow up and keep in touch with the high-school participants. “We will make an active effort to stay connected with the kids,” he said. “After the Lovin’ Life Summer Camp concluded, we created Facebook groups for the camp participants, and now, five months later, they are still very active. That’s the beauty of the internet – you can connect with people from all over the country in a heartbeat. We still have a lot of developing to do, but our goal is to have the heart to develop a lifetime commitment to our younger brothers and sisters.”