

Winter 2023



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The BLAZE Bulletin

Youth Ministry (Grades 6–12)

HAPPENINGS: Themes for the Season

Hey Blaze Fam! This has been an eventful quarter! We had students come together in celebration of what Jesus did in their lives in 2022 and released the year in prayer with a fun floating Lantern celebration!

At the Blaze, we exist to see this generation transformed by the presence of God as they connect with their fellow believers, awakening and developing their purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In **FEBRUARY**, as we dive into our theme "**Suggested Friends**" we'll begin to understand the Father's heart for connection and encounter the miracles that will take place

as we facilitate authentic and spirit-filled connection within Gen Z. Jesus calls us His friends and He died so we would know Him deeper and know Him together—we were never meant to do life alone!

In **MARCH**, Holy Spirit will eradicate isolation from the hearts of His kids. In our March theme "**Never Alone**" Holy Spirit will show the Blaze students that even when people let you down, Jesus never will. This month will birth deeper vulnerability and trust, not only with the Father but within our Church body.

So we know we can trust Jesus and build relationships with our fellow believers . . . now what? In **APRIL** we begin our

theme "**True Religion**" where God will answer questions like

- ◆ "What does faith look like?"
- ◆ "How does faith change my life?"
- ◆ "How does my faith change the world around me?"

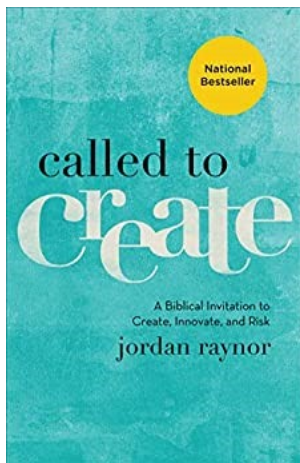
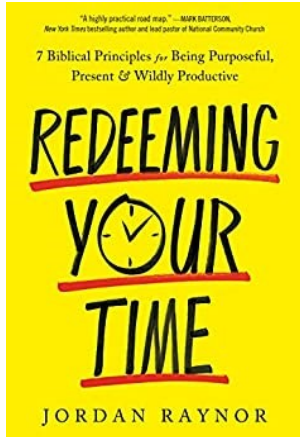
Exploring these questions through the book of James will bring purposeful living day to day with Holy Spirit and this generation.

You don't want to miss what God is doing at the Blaze! He's transforming this generation one saint at a time.





Have You Read



Have You Heard

“Dear God”

Cory Asbury

“Keep my Heart Tender”

UPPERROOM

PARENT’S CORNER: Family Blessings

Please enjoy this article on the importance of Family Blessings from *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* by R. Paul Stevens.

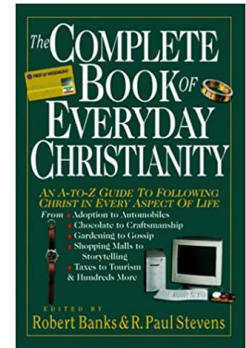
The Importance of Family Blessings

From the earliest age children crave the approval and favor of their parents and will do almost anything to get it. The less-favored son Esau pathetically tried time and again to get his parents’ blessing (especially his mother’s) by marrying women he thought they might approve of, only to find out the wives brought more bitterness to them (*Genesis 26:34–35*). Paradoxically, the parents who withhold affirmation from their children because they fear making the children proud may assist in producing pride and self-centeredness as the children try to prove themselves. Bless children, and they will grow up with good self-esteem and will experience freedom from organizing their life around the need for approval. They may gain a measure of humility and will be more free to think about

others. Blessing a child’s marriage is another crucial ministry of parents, since the freedom to leave one’s father and mother (something both husband and wife must do) is partly, though not totally, facilitated by the parents’ letting go. This blessing includes support, goodwill and expressed love; it means that the parents will never undermine the marriage even if, at an earlier stage in the relationship, they feared the choice was not a good one. As with forgiveness, and sometimes because of it, the parents will put the past in the past when they bless. The parents’ blessing frees not just the children but paradoxically frees the parents to release their children to form a new family unit while still remaining connected to the parents in a revised way. When this is not done, the parents may still be bound to their children even though the children want nothing to do with them. The parents may cling to their married children in a codependent way, a phenomenon that usually leads to a tragic emotional triangle of husband, wife and in-laws. In healthy families, blessings of children and

marriages are not part of a one-time, deathbed drama but are something woven into the warp and woof of everyday life. Daily expressions of appreciation, with or without the actual word bless and not always tied to performance at school or around the house, reinforce that people are valuable for themselves, not just for what they do. Parents who only reward excellent achievement at school are contributing to drivenness and workaholism.

R. Paul Stevens, “Blessing, Family,” in *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A to Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 75–76.



LEADER FOCUS: Caleb Breaux

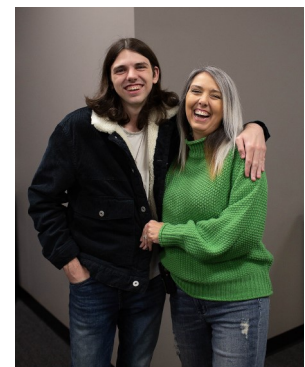
We have a new addition to our Core Team at the Blaze!

CALEB BREAUX embodies what we look for in one of our Core Leaders:

- His heart is after the heart of the Father,
- he sacrificially pursues the vision of this ministry, and

- he values empowering and developing the leaders around him.

Caleb’s addition to this team will amplify our momentum and our unity as a ministry and we’re excited about what Holy Spirit will do through him!



Caleb pictured with his mom, Sherri.

PRAYER FOCUS BY PEDRO CASTAÑEDA

Hye Blaze Fam!

If we could in this season pray against isolation and hard hearts. This generation lives every day faced with the overwhelming weight of our hurting world, leaving them guarded, anxious, and distrustful.

Let's join together and intercede for tender hearts within this generation. Hearts that hunger for the presence of

God and the ever-moving word of God.

We believe that every young Saint will discover their unique purpose that only comes from knowing Jesus. We declare that this generation will not be satisfied with anything less than the tangible presence of God and will be given endurance to lean on Him every moment of every day. We ask for faithful and loving leaders

and mentors from the previous generation to rise up as mothers and fathers, older brothers and sisters. For us to realize the difference between what you have promised to do for us and what you've promised to do through us. Let us not be above discipleship and surrender. Jesus, breathe lasting Love for you and your Church that will transform this Generation for eternity. Let it be done.



GIVING & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

One of our Core Team members, **LIZZY CHILDS**, gives of her time, talents, and her heart to serving in the Blaze Youth ministry. But that's not where her influence ends. You will also find her serving on Sundays in eKidz.

Lizzy carries so many inspiring qualities as a daughter of Jesus and especially in her serving. Her intentionality in her serving speaks volumes to what it means to serve His Church. Lizzy recognizes that the specific methods of discipleship and spiritual growth are unique within the Blaze and eKidz.

She doesn't view eKidz as "babysitting." Lizzy carries her same level of expectation of a move of God within the hearts of our elementary students. The fruit of Lizzy's love for Jesus doesn't stop at her human limitations, she goes the extra mile to see what Holy

Spirit can do through her in multiple areas in our House!



Maybe you want to encounter what Holy Spirit can do in your heart as you partner with His, but you don't know where to start.

Start serving somewhere once a month! Maybe you want to encourage people in first impressions! Maybe you have a heart for intercession and want to join our prayer team, or Jesus is giving you a heart for our eKidz!

The bottom line is quality over quantity, not equal count but equal sacrifice. Choose a

place to serve and serve with your whole heart and watch Jesus meet you there. Here's a list of areas to serve in our House!

- ◆ First Impressions
- ◆ Presenting
- ◆ Prayer Team
- ◆ Worship Team
- ◆ Youth Team
- ◆ eKidz
- ◆ Connect Group Leader

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver.**

2 Corinthians 9:7

BIBLE TRIVIA

- ✓ Jesus was not an only child. He actually had siblings. It might be hard to imagine what it was like to be Jesus's little brother or sister, but Mary and Joseph would go on to have other children after His miraculous birth.
- ✓ Jesus started His ministry later in life, around the age of 30 years. Some of us might expect Him to have started his ministry when He was born, but He actually went through normal experiences growing up as a baby, small child, teenager, and young adult.
- ✓ Jesus got angry. He even turned over tables in the temple. He did not appreciate people that were taking advantage of others in His Father's house. It might be surprising that Jesus showed His anger, but it is refreshing to know He gets angry over issues such as injustice, just like you and me.



CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, I ask that every family or parent or student reading this becomes aware of you at this moment. Would you send your Spirit to hover over them right now and reveal to them the state of their heart. Show

them areas in which they've grown numb to you and remind them of questions they've left unanswered in their heart. Give them strength for their journey with you and the courage to connect with the Church

family deeper than before. To know that we were not made for a life of isolation. Be with us, guide us, and encourage us. In Jesus' name, Amen!

UPCOMING EVENTS: Keep These on Your Radar

Save the Dates

- ◆ April 12
- ◆ May 17
- ◆ July 14-17

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

APRIL 12 NERF HIDE AND SEEK

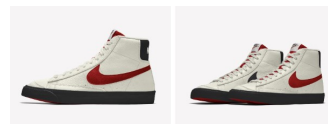


This is a night of adrenaline and fun! 4 leaders will be blindfolded and armed with a Nerf gun as students must try to remain as quiet as possible or be tagged out by one of the blindfolded Nerf hunters! They'll be on a mission to collect all 10 potatoes hidden throughout the Church. First one to collect the most potatoes by the end of the night will win 1,000 points in Squad Game!

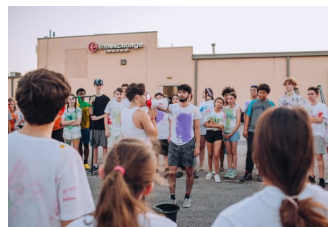


Speaking of which, we decided to allow Squad Game to continue into this year. The goal of Squad Game is to encourage students to invite friends and build community

through fun games! Students receive 5 points every time that they attend a Wednesday night service and 10 points for every friend that they bring! The winner of Squad Game will receive their very own pair of custom Nike "Blaze Saint" Blazers!! You don't wanna miss out on this opportunity to build community . . . and win shoes.



MAY 17 COLOR WAR



We're returning to another color war full of games, paint, and memories made! You don't wanna miss this!!



JULY 14-17 YOUTH REVIVAL CAMP



We will be returning to camp along with several other local youth groups to encounter God's transforming presence.

Prices have increased to \$400 per student this year, and brainstorming for fundraising has already begun. **No student was left behind due to finances last year and Jesus will do it again in 2023!!**

The Spirit of God will transform the heart of every Blaze Saint beyond what they could've imagined for themselves. Let's partner with God's heart for our Blaze Saints in 2023!!

If you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to reach out.







THE BLAZE | BIBLE GUIDE

HOW TO READ THE WORD EVERY DAY:

- Ask the Holy Spirit for help!
- Make time for it; prioritize it.
- Read with friends!
- Consistency: Start with committing to one verse each day!

3 WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE:

- DAILY BREAD
 - Breakfast for your spirit! Ask Jesus what He wants you to read each morning, afternoon, and before bed. Even one verse is enough!
- DEEP STUDY
 - Study the language, authors, and purpose of each book of the Bible. This will strengthen your ability to understand the Bible!
- TEACHING
 - Sunday sermons are the best way to start your journey in the Bible. Especially with friends! Go over Sunday's Bible passage with some friends.
 - Also, listen to Bible podcasts/ YouTube Channels!



HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- THE EXCHANGE CHURCH Podcast
- The Belonging Co Podcast
- The Handlebar Podcast (UPPERROOM)
- The Porch Podcast
- WHOA That's a Good Podcast
- Southside Rabbi
- Thirty Minutes with The Perrys
- Let's Talk About It (Moral Revolution)

SHORT DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES

- YouVersion Bible App
- Glorify App

The Blaze Merchandise



<https://www.bonfire.com/store/awakengreater/>

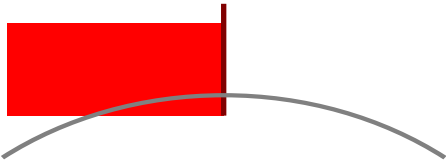


The Exchange Church

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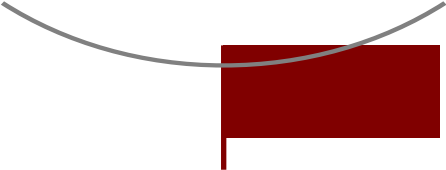
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Who We Are

We exist to see young people transformed by the Presence of God, empowered as a carrier of revival, and infused in a healthy community of believers. All of this is a byproduct of our only goal: To become more like Jesus.



Weekly Services

We meet every Wednesday from 7:30pm to 9:00pm at The Exchange Church in the back the building!



YOUTH LEADERS

Core Team

Pedro Castañeda
Lizzy Childs
Caleb Breaux

Blaze Leaders

Mariely Salinas / Aliah Tait /
Jordan Rose / Ryan Castañeda /
David Dinan / Matthew Breaux

Contact: pedro@theexchangechurch.org