A program of physical and spiritual practices for youth at Takoma Academy.
Abstract

Problem. Encouraging high school youth to embrace the long-term benefits of holistic Christian activities that foster healthy lifestyle outcomes is challenging. Today's youth are focused on the short-sightedness of immediate gratification, with little regard for the long-term consequences from spontaneous and often harmful choices. Furthermore, the ideals of society advocate that the pleasures of life are to be obtained in the present without a critique of their values or consequences thereof. Through compartmentalization and individualized living, adolescents, without an understanding of the holistic life of physical and spiritual disciplines, are prone to make choices that so often fragment their lives in matters of spiritual, mental, or physical development. The traditional church-based youth ministry program or Christian school response to the needs of youth emphasize the fragmented parts of adolescent growth and not the whole person. An after church youth meeting or a school-based sports program highlights either a one-day per week program, athletic games or team sports as an approach to minister to the fragmented needs of youth. Although these activities are useful in terms of demonstrating supportive events that are youth focused, they are often limited in their impact on the holistic needs of today's high school students.

The purpose of this project is to develop a program as a physical education class that uses innovative physical exercises and Christian habits of spiritual disciplines to teach holistic growth for high school students at Takoma Academy. Student practitioners at Takoma Academy adhere to a strict code of conduct and are challenged in all areas of life. The goal of this physical education course is to produce students who embrace physical and spiritual habits of spiritual disciplines as a way of life, not to produce martial artists.

Method. The research was qualitative in that classes were taught at Takoma Academy as part of the regular physical education program. A curriculum was developed that integrated the teaching of physical and spiritual practices from a Christian perspective. Students who were enrolled in the physical education class of Taekwondo at Takoma Academy evaluated the program using a survey that they completed at the end of the semester. The survey assessed how successfully students conceptualized and applied the...
benefits of physical exercise and spiritual practices.

Results. Students were taught how to conceptualize physical fitness and spiritual practices as a method to assist in the process of holistic Christianity. Students were taught how physical exercise, in the form of Taekwondo enhanced their physical fitness, and that the principles of exercise assisted youth in their spiritual development. Students discovered creative methods to practice Christian habits through spiritual practices, such as, Bible study, confession, faith sharing, service and worship.

Subject Area
Church work with youth--Seventh-day Adventists, Physical education and training--Religious aspects, High school students--Maryland--Takoma Park, High school students--Conduct of life, High school students--Spiritual life, Holistic education--Religious aspects--Seventh-day Adventists

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