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MARCH 2020

We've all been impacted by the global crisis that seems to shift and change our lives every day. Though we did *not* see this coming, we know God did, and He is at work!

Love,

Jeff + Karen

PREPARING OUR YOUTH

One joy this spring has been training a new team member (Mark on the bottom right), who has been learning the ropes of equipping and partnering with churches. He has a big vision to see Cru students return to their home church youth groups to let the high schoolers know what to expect when they get to campus (some of the dangers as well as how God can use them). Our goal is to create a training package so Cru around the country can bless local churches.

We're starting with a few cases, and Ezer and Ryan are an awesome pair of Guinea pigs :). Ezer tried to tell Ryan about Jesus when they were in high school.



Ryan on guitar and Ezer on the box drum

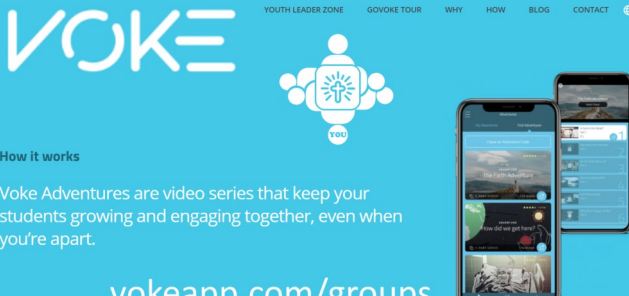
A NEW WAY OF MINISTRY

Around the world, thousands of our college missionaries are off balance with the COVID-19 crisis, separated from the students they've been discipling and from the campus mission field to which they've been called. It is an interesting time for our team, however, who is used to coaching students all over the world over the phone and internet.

This month, I was part of a 4-person team that coached 93 of our ministry leaders in how to prepare and run digital discipleship calls, virtual bible study tips, and [3 tools for sharing the gospel online](#) (with strangers, friends, and as a group). The recording has been circulating through grateful staff who have never considered ministry in this format before, and God has been conspicuously involved --we had already recently been preparing a training page for our staff on distance coaching!

One tool I want to highlight with you is [Voke](#). Originally designed as an app to help teenagers share gospel videos with their non-Christian friends, they've now

developed group video studies with a communal space for answering discussion questions. This has been an awesome tool for youth groups, especially while they are unable to meet directly, and puts evangelism into the hearts of those who've never considered it before.



VOKE

How it works

Voke Adventures are video series that keep your students growing and engaging together, even when you're apart.

vokeapp.com/groups

PRAISES

- * Cru ministry hasn't stopped, and we're learning new tricks
- * Homeschooling continues to go well
- * We're staying digitally connected to loved ones & co-workers
- * Students pouring into youth groups

REQUESTS

- * Protection, an end to the pandemic, and revival
- * Marriages and families
- * Unity in Christ across cultures and ministries
- * For God to use this to spread His glory

Joel 2:12

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."

Highlights This Month

- Arthur and Jeff got to attend a wild game dinner outreach (VERY Florida!) with our friend Frip. Frip and his wife, MaryJo, lead our life group & have done a great job of keeping us connected & encouraged.
- Our kids have been able to Zoom with some of their co-op friends. Arthur & his friend Jonathan have been able to share writing & art for the book they're working on together.
- We're thankful to be connecting well as a family, including a little extra board gaming. Katherine beat us all in a complex game called Scythe, and Arthur beat his dad in chess for the first time!
- We're so, SO grateful that we already homeschool & have a place for Jeff to work from home (and that most of his job can be done almost anywhere). We see this as a tremendous blessing & God has been using our experience to encourage others who are new to doing more at home.



WHAT GOD'S BEEN TEACHING US

Our leaders in Cru have been working hard to make sure all of us college missionaries are cared for as we pour out to so many others. While we're keenly aware of how much we have to be thankful for—and we know it's right to keep our eyes fixed on things above—we also recognize that life's no picnic for anyone right now. We need to process what we're experiencing in order to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ ([2 Cor 10:5](#)). They've talked a lot about paying attention to how we are feeling, and have been helping us walk with the Lord through this time.

In an incredible article called "[Lockdown Grief](#)," we're encouraged to go through a process of **acknowledging, welcoming and expressing** our feelings that helps get them from silently influencing us and into a state where we can manage them and even use these experiences and feelings for God's glory. The Psalms are a wonderful guide God gave us for how we can worship Him with not just our praises, but our petitions, our pleas, and our pain. If we feel it, God wants to hear it. The article encourages us not to minimize our loss by comparing ourselves to those who may have it worse. "Big" or "small," you have lost something!

This was my favorite paragraph: **In grief and fear some are tempted to avoid, ignore, or numb the pain through bingeing Netflix, gaming, turning to alcohol, substance abuse, etc.** Brené Brown reminds us, "when we numb the dark, we numb the light." Grief invites an "evade-encounter" dance. You need some levity in these uncertain times (evade), yet you must also face the realities and impact of your losses (encounter).

It goes on to encourage us to express our feelings through conversations, journaling, exercise, sport, and art. "**Grief needs movement to heal.... Some studies show that moving the body actually helps move the mind and soul as well. These outward expressions help soften the immediate emotional intensity and provide glimmers of hope.**" As we've taken daily walks, the natural world around us has reminded us that God is still in control, and we can rest in His care ([Job 12:7-10](#))

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