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I recently attended a little event held by Young Life College, a Christian group based here on campus.

It was “trivia night”; the event was centered around a Jeopardy-style game about early 2000s knowledge.

Everyone was so friendly, even to someone not looking to join them. Also as a nonbeliever, they welcomed me to participate in their games and hear what they had to say. A wholesome atmosphere permeated the room as cheesy fifteen-year-old music played on the classroom speakers. It reminded me of simpler, more carefree times with less drama and vulgarity.

The religious aspect only came in at the end.

A good friend, Pierce King, invited me to join him at the gathering. He was on my team in the trivia game, which we lost by a large margin. He explained to me his experiences with Young Life and why he participated in it in the first place.

King told me, “I did [Young Life] in high school, and that’s where I met the Lord. Then, when I came to college, I decided to continue it, cause it’s a lot of fun, and I like growing in the Lord and helping others meet him, too.”

King also volunteers in the Young Life High School program, where he meets with high school kids to make friends and discuss their religious experiences. He acts as a mentor to them. I imagine many of those students go on to do Young Life in college as well.

Young Life has three different sections: Young Life College, Young Life High School, and “Wyld Life” for middle school.

They practice what is known as “relational ministry” which foregoes the moral underpinnings of a typical ministry. They “earn the right to be heard” by focusing first and foremost on genuine

friendships with the religious aspect being secondary.

Young Life is nondenominational, which means that all sorts of Christian views are welcome and accounted for.

They train new leaders in the Spring. Their doors are open for anyone wishing to hear their message, and I appreciate that. There's a sense of community in religion that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Every semester, the leaders decide on a theme for their meetings, usually a concept from the Gospels. This year, however, they have selected idolatry.

According to Emily Brown, the staff leader of Young Life at Radford, worship is the "perennial issue of mankind," and their meetings will all tie into how to avoid things that we "love more than God."

Even separate from the religious context, this is a good lesson. It encourages everyone to take a step back and reevaluate their priorities. God in this regard could easily be a metaphor for family or a sense of personal accomplishment.

Our lives are increasingly full of distractions; social media, parties on the weekends and national news all serve to pull our attention away from what we have a personal stake in, be it God or something else.

I enjoyed my experience with Young Life. It is an incredibly friendly group of people with an increasingly rare outlook on life. The story of Jesus has many lessons that don't require belief in anything.

It is the duty of a student to achieve an open mind and find wisdom wherever it may originate.