



AT TEENS FOR CHRIST Sunday night, Michael Noren rewarded Matt Glading (above) for good behavior during the game. Brittany Urban (below) jumped up and down while rubbing her stomach and patting her head during the game.



Teenagers learn about God

Around 20 students gather every Sunday evening in downtown Oberlin to play games, sing songs and learn more about God.

Teens for Christ has been part of the Oberlin scene for about 15 years, with Pastor Doug Mason at the helm for the last five. He and his wife Johanna lead the Sunday night get together with help from a few adult volunteers.

The group, said Pastor Mason, is open to students in seventh through 12th grades. The evening starts at 6 p.m., although often teens start showing up around 5:30. It officially ends at 8 p.m., but the kids often don't leave until 8:30 p.m.

Each Sunday evening starts with a game that lasts about 30 minutes. They then have worship music, announcements, a Spotlight on Scripture, "God sighting," prayer and a lesson.

During the spotlight segment, a student gets to read a scripture and say what it means to them. God sighting, he said, is a time when they can talk about where they have seen God at work during the week.

Teens for Christ holds a leadership camp in the fall. For the last two years, he said, the group has sent someone to the camp. Those trained leaders help when the large group breaks into small ones after the message. The five leaders ask questions about the lesson and lead discussions.

Part of the mission statement for the group is that it exists to fill a void in youth ministry. Teens for Christ isn't there to compete with church youth groups; it just fills a void and teaches kids what it means to be a Christian. The group isn't attached to any local church, he added.

Often the group attracts students who don't go to church, said Pastor Mason, and hopefully helps them get to the point where they start to go. The Oberlin group has a mixture



PASTOR DOUG MASON explained the rules of the game to the students during the weekly Teens for Christ meeting Sunday night.

of teens who attend and don't attend a local church.

Besides the monthly meetings, the group has two large events each year. So far this year, they've been ice skating in Kearney, Neb., on New Year's Day.

The group plans two mission trips this year. As soon as school is out, a trip will leave for two weeks to Mississippi, he said. Another, at

the beginning of June, involves two weeks in Mexico to do outreach with children and other projects.

In the last few months the Masons started opening their home to the teens Monday morning for a hot breakfast and devotions before school. Six or seven kids usually show up, she said, but with the late start last week, there were 10.

It doesn't cost anything to join

and all teens are welcome. The only way it might cost something is if they are going somewhere.

Pastor Mason said he is looking for adult volunteers or a couple who wants to get involved in the youth ministry. He would like to mentor someone younger than him about youth ministry and see if they take to the work.