

yellow 2026 SEPTEMBER

I just returned from Brazil after 22 straight days of ministry, reaching thousands of young people during Brazil's suicide prevention awareness month known as "Yellow September." Our team traveled through the states of Pernambuco and Paraíba, focusing primarily on the cities of Recife, Campina Grande and Olinda. In just over 3 weeks, we held 37 meetings and distributed more than 8,000 Joyce Meyer books.

Talking about suicide and self-harm is never easy, especially when you know that sitting in front of you are young people who may be silently fighting that battle themselves. Some have never told anyone what they are going through. Others have lived with pain, rejection, abuse or hopelessness for so long that it has simply become part of their everyday life. But one thing I have learned over the years is that truth does not have to be complicated to be powerful. When you begin talking honestly about suicide, pain and the value of life, something happens. Walls begin to come down, fear

and stigma begin to lose their grip, and conversations that desperately need to happen finally begin.

What still amazes me is the access we continue to have in Brazil. Local city governments open the doors of the public schools and thousands of young people walk into those auditoriums carrying things we may never know about, but for that short amount of time, we have their attention. We have an open door. And we have the opportunity to remind them of something that pain has a way of making us forget:

***Your life has value,
there is hope, and
your story isn't over!***



Everywhere I travel, I meet first responders who appreciate receiving gear from fellow officers. In Pernambuco, the K9 unit was especially grateful for the gifts from the Redlands Police Department; a simple connection between those who wear the badge.



In each school we would speak to anywhere from 100 to 400 students at a time, often doing two or three meetings a day in different parts of the city. Our days were long—many started around 7:00 in the morning and didn't finish until after 5:00—but every new school meant another room full of young people and another opportunity to talk about **life** and **hope**!

What we do is really pretty simple. We talk openly about suicide—what it is, how it begins, and the subtle process that can slowly move someone from pain and disappointment into isolation, hopelessness and eventually suicidal thinking. I share my own story and the impact suicide has had on my family, and then use a short presentation from the “Sea of Trees” to help them see where those thoughts can ultimately lead. From there, everything moves toward the same destination: *there is another way*. There is **hope**. There is **life**. There is **redemption** in Christ.

Over the years I have come to call this our “**Life Formula**.” I don't change it much because I have watched it work over and over again. It reaches them on 3 very different levels: **mind**, **soul** and **spirit**.

- We challenge the **mind** by exposing the lies and thought patterns that feed hopelessness.
- We touch the **soul** through story, emotion and personal testimony.
- We speak to the **spirit**, reminding them that their life has value, their pain does not have to define their future, and that there is a God who sees them, knows them and still has a purpose for their life.

Mind. Soul. Spirit.

Life Formula: it gives us a way to speak to the whole person, not just the issue.



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My goal has never been to just hold an event, pack everything up and move on to the next city. I want to start a conversation about life, hope and ultimately about faith. We may only have a few hours with these young people, but the conversation must continue after we are gone. This is why working alongside local churches and ministry partners is so important. They are there *before* we arrive, and more importantly, they are still there *after* we leave.

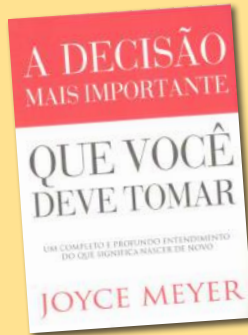
The books we give away become another part of that conversation. A student takes a book home, it ends up on a kitchen table, a mother picks it up, a brother reads it, perhaps a friend borrows it, and suddenly something that began in a school auditorium has made its way into a home or two. That is what I love about what we do. We may speak to one student, **but God has a way of carrying the message much further than we ever could.** At every event we boldly present the Gospel and give every student an opportunity to respond personally to Jesus. Over these 3 weeks, thousands prayed a prayer of salvation and publicly professed their faith, and for many of them, it was the very first time.

I have learned over the years is that you can never predict what is going to happen in one of these events. We may use the same format, show the same video and preach the same message, but every room is different. You are standing in front of hundreds of young people, and you simply have no idea what they carried into that room with them that morning.

Some are angry. Some are broken. Some have been abused. Some are struggling with depression, self-harm or thoughts of suicide. Some have already decided that life isn't worth living. And then we walk into the middle of all of that and start talking about **LIFE!**

We have watched students get up and walk out angry. Others begin to sob. At times we see very intense reactions, students crying out, falling to the floor or physically shaking. There are moments when you can feel the battle raging in the room. It reminds me again and again that what we are dealing with is much more than a mental health statistic or a social problem. *We are fighting a spiritual battle for lives.*

John 10:10 probably describes what I see better than any other verse in the Bible: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."



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There are moments during these meetings when I honestly feel helpless. You look out at hundreds of young people and realize how much pain is staring back at you. You can't fix every home, undo what has happened or reach every hurting child. That became painfully clear on this trip. For the first time, I opened some meetings to 10- and 12-year-olds. I normally don't because of the maturity of the subject, but their response was as strong, sometimes stronger, than the older students. After our last event, an 11-year-old girl waited in line to speak with me. When she reached me, she was trembling and sobbing. She grabbed me and wouldn't let go. Then she showed me the scars on her arms and told me she had tried more than once to end her life because of the pain she was carrying at home. She was 11 years old. *Eleven.*

Standing there holding her, I felt truly helpless. What do you say to a child who has already decided more than once that dying would hurt less than living?

She had been raised in a religious home and knew about God, but in that moment she needed more than religion. She needed to know that God saw her, had not abandoned her, and that her life still had value. Thankfully, we never do these events alone. School psychologists, counselors, pastors, and volunteers are there to help these young people take the next steps toward healing. I

wish I could tell you she was the exception. She wasn't. Behind every statistic is a child with a name, a face, scars, and a story. Some are carrying things at 11 years old that no child should carry.



Chad Daniel Ministries
 PO Box 2151, Redlands, CA 92373
www.chaddanielministries.com



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It has been a fruitful year thus far: **lives changed, souls saved,** and a **message of life and hope** shared with tens of thousands of young people. Thank you for continuing to stand with me.

Your investment makes it possible for us to reach a generation that has everything to live with, yet often feels they have nothing to live for.

Together, we are reminding them that their life has value, their story is not over, and there is always hope.

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