



A service of the
Northwest District
of the
Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod

Youth Supports

A resource to encourage and empower youth leaders for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom.

June 2001 - Volume 2, Issue 6

- **Whom Are You Working With?**
- **Kaleidoscope!**
- **List of people and resources available to you!**

Whom Are You Working With?

What are the family background of the young people with whom you work? Are they all from "typical" families, where dad works, mom stays home, and nice-looking kids go off to school or play? Of course not! First of all, a "typical" family no longer exists (if it ever did). Families have changed, and not always for the better, But adult workers with youth can do some exciting things to help families experience the joy and love of Jesus Christ. And these have happened throughout the years as people like yourself have taken the time to listen. to be sensitive, and to be understanding of young people around you.

Here are suggestions for you to consider this month:

1. Don't assume that all teenagers come from well-adjusted, complete homes. They don't. Be especially sensitive in dealing with young people. To ask a 15-year-old to tell a group how he gets along with his mother and father may be quite embarrassing, especially if he has no father.
2. Spend time individually with young people, attempting to better understand their family situation. You can do this without coming on like "gangbusters" with them. Simple conversation helps them to share with you. Share some of your own family joys and disappointments so they will feel more comfortable in sharing theirs.
3. Visit the homes of your young people. A pastor once remarked that he can understand a young person better by spending 15 minutes in her home rather than being alone one hour with her.
4. Check your materials to assure that it doesn't generalize about families, or add guilt on someone. For example, dealing directly with the changing role and make-up of families could be beneficial for the group, especially in helping individuals realize they are not alone in their struggles and joys.
5. Recent studies of the attitudes of teens shows that they are more interested in their family relationships. Knowing this can help you and other adults working with you to be more aware of the great opportunities you have to witness and to share your faith with these people.

When we talk about families, whatever their make-up, we should work to involve the total family in youth ministry in the parish. Rather than having youth ministry dissect the family, consider ways to involve the whole family. Try these:

1. Bring families together for worship, a picnic, or a special event. Do it regularly.

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Bring
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Share
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2. Encourage inter-generational ministry, where children, youth and adults have Bible study, make evangelism calls, clean the church yard, or decorate the Christmas tree.
3. Bring in special speakers and programs dealing with the family. Have a youth/parent night and discuss a film or video. Have parents from a neighboring church visit with your youth while parents from your church visit with youth from the neighboring church.
4. Make yourself available to talk and to visit with both youth and their parents. Encourage and train other adults to do the same.
5. Be a model of forgiveness in your own life. Share your problems and joys in your family, past and present, with youth. Show them that forgiveness is not just a word, but an action which God has first shared with us in Jesus Christ.

Enjoy the challenges and the relationships that develop among you and the young people, and their families. You are not called upon to be a substitute parent-you are called to be a bridge to help youth and their families better relate and communicate! Christ has given us the model of love and acceptance. And the Holy Spirit gives us the power to use them.

If the shoe fits, wear it! And wear it well, in the name of Jesus!

-Adapted from *Counselor's Page, Resources for Youth Ministry* 1981:2 Copyright (c) 1981 by Board for Youth Ministry, now LCMS Congregational Services - Youth Ministry, St. Louis, MO Used with permission.

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

<http://www.nowlcms.org/Youth/ysupportslist.html>

Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope is a great week long youth event for up to 4 youth per congregation. You can read and see photos about it at

<http://www.nowlcms.org/Youth/YTalk/April00/yt0004a.html>

This year's K-Scope is scheduled for July 9 - 14 at the Christ Lutheran Retreat Center at Belfair, WA. Contact Jeff Kranich at HopeSeattle@aol.com or (206) 937-9330 for more information!

The Department of Youth Ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has several Internet resources available to you.

A monthly E-Bulletin about national and regional events throughout the country. To subscribe to the Youth Ministry E-Bulletin send, to MAILSERV@crf.cuis.edu, the message: SUBSCRIBE E-BULLETIN

To unsubscribe send, to MAILSERV@crf.cuis.edu, the message: UNSUBSCRIBE

To find out about Bible studies, song books, and other resources available from the Department of Youth Ministry, check out the DYM Web site: <http://cs.lcms.org/youth>.

Youth Ministry Consultants in Your Area: Contact Dick Weniger at the district office at 503/288-8383.

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