



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.

September 2001 - Volume 2, Issue 9

- Six Keys to a Healthier Family - Part 1
- List of people and resources available to you!

Six Keys to a Healthier Family - Part 1

A person doesn't have to look too far to discover the challenges today's families are facing. But just identifying those challenges doesn't necessarily bring families any closer to health. The good news is that there is research which affirms what healthy families are doing to build strengths in their homes.

These "Family Strengths" have become the structural framework for Family Ministry at Bethlehem in Aloha. My intuition tells me that these Family Strengths are just as true for youth groups and congregations as they are for families.

So here are six positive, research proven strengths to intentionally target in your ministry to families and youth:

1 - Living Faith

Strong families have a faith that gives them purpose, strength, and hope. Research affirms what we've known all along. Our relationship with Christ does make a difference! Our relationship with Christ empowers us to build relationships which are characterized by unconditional acceptance, forgiveness, a sense of safety and trust that invites intimacy. God's covenant love makes living faith possible and binds a Christian family together with a strength beyond their own ability and a hope that carries them through life's most difficult challenges.

Ministry Opportunities:

- Creating and sharing Faith stories
- Discussion guides for families to use to continue their discussion of sermons.
- Faith conversations ~ "teachable moments"

#2 - Commitment

Members of strong families are dedicated to promoting each other's welfare and happiness. They value unity in the family. You will notice as we share these six strengths that the term love is missing. Too many of us look at love as a feeling, and there are many good feelings associated with love. But our relationship is much deeper than feelings, because there are days when our moods fluctuate and our feelings change.

Thus, the word commitment is used to describe a special kind of love - a love steady and sure that isn't subject to mood swings or the passage of years or hard times. It is a love that is conscious and unconditional. Commitment-love says "I decide and promise to love you because of who you are, not what you do or how I feel." We believe the word commitment describes the kind of love God models for each of us.

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Ministry Opportunities:

- Helping families develop their own Family Mission Statement
- Developing Family Stance on Key Life Issues (such as sexuality, substances, etc.)

#3 - Communication

Members of strong families have good communication skills and spend a lot of time talking with each other. They talk about small, trivial topics as well as profound, deep issues of life.

Communication is the process through which every person knows they are an integral part of the family. Members of strong families report feeling valued and respected when they are encouraged to express their ideas and concerns. It's no surprise, then, that they also report that their family members are good listeners. Good communication is not something we are born knowing how to do ~ it is a skill that is learned and can be taught. And that's good news for families!

Ministry Opportunities:

- Family meetings
- FaithTalk (Augsburg Youth and Family Institute)

Helping families understand what their strengths are and teaching them how to turn their weaknesses into strengths will build healthy families. We pray that God would "Heal-Thy" families and "Heal-Thy" congregations because we know that *healthy* families make for *healthy* congregations.

- Bob Fossum, Family Minister, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Aloha, OR

See Part 2 of *Six Keys to Healthier Family* in next month's *Youth Supports!*

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

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

One of the items is a monthly E-Bulletin to "provide current information on youth events, resources, updates, plus various & sundry items of interest to youth workers (and youth) of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod." To subscribe to the Youth Ministry E-Bulletin send this message: SUBSCRIBE E-BULLETIN to MAILSERV@crf.cuis.edu.

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

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

Youth Ministry consultants help you to either fine tune your youth ministry, refresh it or get you started on a complete overhaul. Contact Dick Weniger at the district office at 503/288-8383 or email him at dickw@nowlcms.org for more information on how a Youth Ministry Consultant can help you and your congregation!

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