



A service of the
Northwest District
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Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod

Youth Supports

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

October 2001 - Volume 2, Issue 10

- Six Keys to a Healthier Family - Part 2
- List of people and resources available to you!

Six Keys to a Healthier Family - Part 2

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:

#4 Time

Strong families spend time - quality time in large quantities - with each other.

I don't know if you have ever heard this quote, but it is profound: How do kids spell love? T-I-M-E! The happiest memories I have of my childhood are not about things we had...they are about the people with whom I shared my time - the camping trips with just me and my dad; the storms that blew out the power to our house, leaving my family on an indoor "camp-out."

Ministry Opportunities:

- Time Management Retreat
- Family Nights as part of Youth Ministry

#5 Appreciation

Members of strong families show appreciation for each other a great deal.

We live in our culture that does not spend much time practicing appreciation. South African diamond miners spend their lives sifting through thousands of tons of rock and dirt looking for a few tiny diamonds. They know that what they're going to find in those tons of dirt will more than compensate all of their efforts to find it. Too often in family relationships, people tend to do just the opposite. They sweep aside the diamonds, eagerly searching for dirt. However, members of strong, healthy families are diamond experts. They look for the good in each other.

John Gottman (*Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*) of the University of Washington in his research has discovered that one of the things that really sets apart strong families is "a healthy balance between their positive and negative feelings and actions toward each other." In his research, they charted the amount of time couples spent fighting versus interacting positively - touching, smiling, paying compliments, laughing, etc. Across the board, they found there was a very specific ratio that exists between the amount of positivity and negativity in strong

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families...and that magic ratio is 5 to 1. In other words, as long as there is five times as much positive feeling and interaction between family members as there is negative, families were found to be healthy. What can your family do to create an atmosphere in which there is five times as much positivity as negativity?

Ministry Opportunities:

- Family Book of Blessing
- Saying thank you to our children for jobs well done.

#6 Coping Skills

Members of strong families possess skills which allow them to view crisis as an opportunity to grow.

There's an old adage that says: "It's not the great storm that destroys the giant oak tree - it's the little bugs!" It's ironic that we weather the great storms and crisis in life and then allow insignificant, petty irritations to destroy our happiness and health.

Members of strong families support one another during challenging times. Because family members feel valued by one another, they tend not to feel alone in dealing with difficulties. The ability to cope effectively with life challenges is rooted in the nature of the family relationships — and is strengthened through the acquiring of skills, such as the ability to problem-solve and good communication.

Ministry Opportunities:

- Parenting Classes
- Learning Effective Communication Skills

Knowing available community resources (Christian counselors) for help in times of crisis. 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 1 of *Six Keys to Healthier Family* in last 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>.

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