



A service of the
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Youth Supports

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

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Involve youth
in
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Articulate
and nurture
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Develop
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and a
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How Can a Congregation Implement the Assets?

(Editor's note: Take time to read the first two parts in this series of articles on Developmental Assets. The first part can be found at:

<http://www.nowlcms.org/Youth/YouthSupports/ys0202.html>

Reading that first two will help to understand this third part of the series.)

Understanding what *Developmental Assets* are and how they can positively impact young people is vitally important in today's world. Connecting people to make them tangible for our youth is the real challenge of youth ministry. In a publication made available by Lutheran Brotherhood entitled *Tapping the Potential*, Glenn Seefeldt and Eugene Roehlkepartain list ten asset-building strategies for congregations. Here are five of the ten they listed:

6. Involve youth in constructive activities –

Congregations have great potential for meeting young people's need for constructive activities. They can provide: 1) Safe, positive places to spend time after school or in the evenings, particularly if the congregation is in an unsafe neighborhood. 2) Opportunities for recreation, athletics, or socializing with friends (both those within the congregation as well as others they might invite to participate). 3) Opportunities for youth to build skills (for example, through computer training), enhance their education (through tutoring), and nourish their creativity (through music, theater, or other arts).

7. Articulate and nurture positive values –

While schools and other organizations often shy away from discussions of values, shaping values is at the core of the congregation's mission. By articulating and nurturing positive values (such as compassion, honesty, equality, respect, and responsibility), congregations help provide a foundation for many of the life choices young people will make.

8. Develop social competencies and a positive identity –

Young people need a set of social competencies or life skills to thrive. These include being able to make good decisions, being comfortable with people who are different, knowing how to make friends, having high self-esteem, and having a sense of hope and purpose. Congregations have opportunities to build these competencies, particularly if intentional efforts are made. These may include: 1) Involving youth in challenging leadership positions where they practice decision-making and assertiveness skills. 2) Providing a caring, supportive, and affirming climate that nurtures a

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positive self-image. 3) Building friendship-making skills into religious education classes, youth group meetings, retreats, etc.

9. Educate and support parents –

While it is true that everyone in a community has responsibility for raising young people, the family is the primary shaping influence. Congregations have unique access to families, since they maintain ongoing contact with many parents who often look to the faith community for education, guidance, and support. By strengthening parents' abilities to build assets in their families, congregations can have a tremendous and lasting impact on young people. Strategies might include: 1) Providing educational and support groups for parents. 2) Emphasizing family involvement in service projects in the community. 3) Offering opportunities for youth and parents to talk together within the context of the congregation (in classes, retreats, or other settings).

10. Reach out to the community –

In addition to reshaping the congregation's work with youth, an asset-building vision challenges your congregation to reach into your community to create a healthier place for *all* youth. Building bridges can happen on many levels. You can: 1) Advocate with and on behalf of youth when public issues that affect their lives need to be addressed. 2) Connect with congregations of many faith traditions to nurture a shared commitment to asset building. Building relationships can open doors for joint training, support, programming, and advocacy. 3) Develop strategies for reaching youth who are not connected to congregations or other positive socializing systems in the community.

I pray these ideas for developing assets in your congregations might change the way and look of youth ministry in our entire church. God's peace to all of you as we seek His guidance in caring for His people.

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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 7-12 at the Christ Lutheran Retreat Center at Belfair, WA (Hood Canal area). Registration cost is \$140. Contact Pastor John Schmidt at Kscopenow@cs.com or (253) 584-2565 for more information!

Youth with a Calling?

Our two seminaries have scheduled special events for those considering a call into full time church work. Check out [Christ Academy 2002](#), at Concordia, Ft. Wayne from June 16-29, 2002 and [Exploring Church Careers Event \(ECCE\)](#) scheduled for Aug. 3-6, 2002 on the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, campus.

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