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Youth Supports

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

January 2003 - Volume 4, Issue 1

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Be Apparent

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

— Matthew 14:25-32 (NIV)

"My throat hurts." "I'm pretty sure my appendix is about to explode ... if you sent me to school with that knowledge, wouldn't you get in a lot of trouble?" "I don't wanna go." "Nobody likes me. They all tease me." "Aw, come on. Just this once,...can't I just stay home?"

Some days it's really hard to get out of bed and get ready for school. Kids become VERY creative when it comes time to get up some days. (So do we when it comes to getting dressed for work!!) There are a lot of reasons it may be difficult for a child of any age to want to go to school on any given day. Maybe there's a test they dread or homework that wasn't completed. Maybe it's insecurity about some new clothes or a hairdo that they are planning to wear - "What will people think?" Maybe it's other kids that they can't stand. "Can't I just stay here in bed today? Tomorrow too? Until summer?"

Yeah, we've all been there. The thing about going to school, is ... YOU HAFTA GO. Even if everything mentioned above applies to a child on any given day - or every day - kids HAFTA go to school. There's laws and parents and child protective services and a little thing call Graduation some day. The only alternative is home schooling.

As we look back at the perseverance it took to get through the school experience, we as adults can remember and understand: the daily rituals of getting up and going to school, learning the stuff we didn't like or never thought we would use, learning to get along with teachers and peers — all these helped us grow and mature into the

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May 2003
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at
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people we are today. No we probably don't BOUND out of bed everyday, but we understand that it's a HAFTA.

Some days our kids feel like THEY'RE sinking. Some days we feel like we're sinking. But... look again at the story at the beginning of this letter. Peter really WAS sinking in a lake. He called out to Jesus, "Lord, save me!" Did Jesus look down his nose at Peter and say, "Uh ... no," "You asked for it," or "Peter, you've got to do something about this sinking problem. It happens way too often." No. It says **immediately** Jesus reached out His hand and saved Peter. **Immediately**. Whatever situation you or the youth you know find yourselves in, God wants to hear about it! Cry out to Him FIRST!

Within the church, we have many different ways we, parents and youth, can learn more about God and His love and purpose for us. Take time during the week to be taught. Make a concentrated effort to make sure your youths' parents are being taught. The regular study of God's Word is VERY IMPORTANT. It's even more important than school studies. In the same way that we wouldn't think of excusing our children from going to school, we shouldn't excuse them from a regular study of God's Word. If our youth are involved in extra activities that prevent Christian education attendance, then home schooling in the Bible is in order. Remember too that we never "graduate" from the study of God's Word. It is a life long learning process.

Encourage the parents in your congregation to BE APPARENT. A message for parents: Let your kids know their Christian education is very important by being apparent — tell them outright — no matter how old they are — that what they learn from God is highest on the list. Pray with them. Even simple prayers will do. Show them by your own regular study of God's Word that it is essential. Don't just make it apparent, be apparent. Let them see you holding God's Word in high esteem. They know you are not perfect, you know they are not perfect, but you are both FORGIVEN. Revel in the knowledge together.

If your youth are having trouble attending church and/or Christian education activities, pray to God. Ask Him to help this area. God demonstrates how soon He will help us in the story about Peter. How soon? **Immediately**.

Praise God for lifelong learning. God is there for us — always. Always he wants us to know Him more and more. SO, grab the kids, get out of the boat and walk on the water!

— Sarah Syverson, member of Zion Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington, and currently involved in some very personal youth ministry as the mother of three children.

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx

District Youth Gathering - May 16-18

Have you received your congregation's copy of the registration information for the May 2003 District Youth Gathering at Seaside, OR? The materials were sent out just before Thanksgiving.

If you need a copy of the materials, please contact Ed Grassel at

<egrassel@aslansoftware.com>

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