



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.

March 2003 - Volume 4, Issue 3

- Youth Group + Confirmation = Fun In Faith (1)
- District Youth Gathering Information

---

## Youth Group + Confirmation = Fun In Faith (Part 1)

For more than four years, our congregation has been experimenting with Rich Melheim's **Head to the Heart** model for confirmation instruction. **Head to the Heart** emphasizes teaching the faith through a myriad of multi-sensory learning events and small group discussions. For example, instead of a sixty-minute lecture on Luther's explanation of the First Article, the same material is presented through a kaleidoscope of music, skits, video clips, games, servant events, and group discussions. Having rocked the sacred cow of confirmation by implementing this "radical" new model of faith education, our congregational leadership initially left the learning events in the hands of the Pastor and DCE. But this year we took a bold new step: Guided by our called staff, our high school group was given the challenge of planning and leading our confirmation learning events. The students took the challenge and ran with it. After realizing that the church walls would not collapse, we made five important discoveries by having our senior high youth lead the confirmation program: 1) Our senior high youth can teach the faith; 2) They have many gifts and talents; 3) They continue to grow in their faith; 4) They can be fiercely dedicated to church ministry; and 5) They can have a lot of fun doing it.

### *Teaching the Faith*

Educational theorists have long argued that one of the best ways to learn something is to teach it. In Luke 9:1-6, Jesus models this instructional method as he sends out His pupils to share the message of the Kingdom of God. The disciples take what Jesus teaches them, internalize the message into something they believe, and then articulate their beliefs to others. Through our youth-led confirmation program, our high school teens recall what they heard in confirmation, dissect the information until they understand it, and then repackage what they learned so that it impacts our junior high youth. Just imagine the faith-to-life application that transpires when we ask our senior high youth to present the sixth commandment or explain the benefits

... instead of  
a sixty-  
minute  
lecture ...the  
same  
material is  
presented  
through a  
kaleidoscope  
of music,  
skits, video  
clips, games,  
servant  
events and  
group  
discussions.

... each youth  
has an  
opportunity to  
use his/her  
unique gifts  
and talents.

May 2003  
District  
Youth  
Gathering  
at  
Seaside,  
OR!

of baptism to the confirmands. While they get to present the ideas in fun and creative ways, they still have to struggle with the material. Foundations of faith that may have once seemed abstract or irrelevant are transformed into concrete and life-applicable concepts that they can teach to others.

#### *One Body, Many Parts*

Since we use a variety of media and activities to present our confirmation theme each week, each youth has an opportunity to use his/her unique gifts and talents. Some youth “ham it up” by leading humorous skits in front of the class. Our musically inclined youth get to lead songs that reinforce the evening’s theme. Other youth prefer to be behind the scenes: choosing to operate the PowerPoint® presentations, create banners that display Bible verses, or design video “commercials” that focus on the key biblical teachings. It is exciting to see teenagers uncovering their unique abilities and enthusiastically using them to serve the Lord.

— *Chris Schwenneker has served in the field as a Director of Christian Education since 1995. He currently serves as the Minister of Youth and Young Adults at St. John Lutheran Church in Vancouver, Washington. He is a graduate of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is currently working on a Masters in Family Life Ministry through Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska.*

(Editor: The second part of this article will appear in next month’s issue of *Youth Supports*, but feel free to contact Chris before then if you have any questions.)

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

[http://www.nowlcms.org/educational\\_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx](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>](mailto:egrassel@aslansoftware.com)

---

Except as noted, all text and photographs are © Northwest District of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod. All contents, except as noted, may be duplicated for use in local congregations as long as the source is noted. If you have any comments or responses for this publication, please contact Glenn Zander, 2142 NE McDonald Lane, McMinnville, OR 97128 [<forgivn@macnet.com>](mailto:forgivn@macnet.com)