



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.

June 2003 - Volume 4, Issue 6

- Leading Youth into a Confrontation with God
- E-Newsletter from Synod Youth Board

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## Leading Youth into a Confrontation with God

### The Goal:

“If my people, who are called by my name, *will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways*, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.”—2 Ch 7:14 (NIV) In this God is reassuring the Jewish people that He can only help them if they are willing to be humble, pray and seek God's face. This is where our youth need to be when they walk out the doors of our church. They need to be *seeking the face* of Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior who shed His blood for all of them so that they can be reconciled with their Creator, Our Father. This seeking will lead them into a *confrontation with the Creator*.

### Formal Education:

Most of us Christian educators do a fairly good job of teaching the word of God to these youth through memorization, life application, experiential teaching, and other innovative and creative methodologies. So depending on each youth, their knowledge of God comes through their experiences with God such as prayer, Sunday school, VBS, confirmation, children's church, midweek school, worship, servant events, and instruction from their parents. The Holy Spirit reveals the love of Jesus through all these means.

### The Struggle of the Youth:

We have an opportunity to each child we come in contact with to share this simple message: God accepts them the way they are and He loves them so much that He sacrificed his own Son whose blood cleanses them from their sins and restores their relationship with God. To most teenagers or youth this truth is hard to understand and too many times they are disillusioned by their iniquities which makes them in their minds, worthless. Their self worth is determined by what others see in them and what they see of themselves in the mirror.

The next step in this regard is to take each youth from the *concrete thinking* mode where their faith reflects that of their Christian educators (parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers etc), into *abstract thinking*. This means that the youth finds out for himself what *his faith* is based on. This means he is in constant tension between God's will and his sinful nature, a struggle that lasts throughout his whole lifetime. He is aware of his sins and seeks grace from God through His Son's death. The youth is torn between the *Laws* by which they are to abide and yet fall short of and the *Gospel* they receive freely by sacrifice of the Lamb, Jesus.

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is centered on God's will and another life that is centered on their need for acceptance by their peers, parents and other influential adults which includes you the youth leader. Each youth is in a different place on his/her own journey. You have some who know nothing about Jesus, and others who have gone through some formal education about Jesus including confirmation.

This is also the time where their faith comes to a real test and when a youth can either be led away from God or *closer to His presence*. An example would be a youth who was deciding if he should confront his best friend about his friend's attitude towards drugs and alcohol. Either the youth can stand up and to his friend and tell him what he is doing is wrong and possibly bear the consequences of losing his friend, be ridiculed, and maybe even persecuted physically, or the youth could join his friend and justify his conscience and retain his friendship with this person. When a youth does decide to follow Jesus, he also *will bear the cross* as Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew 16: 24, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and *take up his cross* and follow me." (NIV)

#### **What can we do as Youth Leaders:**

Going back to our example, the youth decides to confront his friend, he should do so through *his conviction in the word of God* and not just what he learned from us. He should not use our arguments when explaining his reasoning for doing God's will but rather refer to the Scriptures to build his foundation for truth. This means that each youth is being challenged to be in the *presence of God*, which is being in the *Word and prayers*, which will result in letting God's will guide them and not their sinful desires. This is a major struggle for youth, yet they can take comfort in what was written in 1 Peter 4: 12-13: "Dear friends do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (NIV)

In all things, remind your youth that God accepts them the way they are and that He loves them no matter what they do and that their salvation was given to them by the death of His Son, Jesus on cross. We as youth leaders are called to lead them to seek the face of their creator and take up the cross of suffering knowing that being more in the presence of their Savior will leave them spending less time following their sinful desires. Confrontation with God gives the youth ownership and responsibility and accountability for their faith. Let's prepare our youth to a confrontation with God so that He can guide them.

—In Christ, [Uma](#) (Kanagasabai Umashankar) Director of Christian Education  
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[http://www.nowlcms.org/educational\\_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx](http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx)

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### **E-Newsletter from Synod Board of Youth Ministry**

The Board of Youth ministry for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a monthly e-bulletin with youth ministry information. To subscribe to it, go to <http://www.lcms.org/enews/> and follow the directions.

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