



A service of the
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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.

February 2004 - Volume 5, Issue 2

- Meaningful Ministry and Mountain Top Moments
- *New youthEsource* resource from Synod

The
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the 2001
National
Youth
Gathering in
New
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Consider
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Meaningful Ministry and Mountain Top Moments

The church where I served my internship took 53 youth to the 2001 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. This mass migration from Nebraska was hailed as a glorious achievement. All of the youth, members or friends of members would go to "Higher Ground" for this mountain top experience to become "closer to God". Such was the anticipation of this event that every effort of fundraising was focused solely for this one activity, and with good reason: imagine the cost of taking 53 youth to New Orleans, registration, hotel, transportation, food, etc. Yet, many of the youth who attended returned to their former lives completely untouched by the Gathering. Youth who had been inactive members, at best, tended to become less active, now that the reason for participation had passed. In fact, the well-meaning young man who had taken over my young charges the January before the gathering reported that there had been little or no change in the participation of any of the youth group members for the next year. "What Happened?" was his question.

I believe what happened was the youth gathering itself. Now I am not opposed to the National Youth Gathering, nor do I believe that it has not had profound influence in the lives of young people. Rather, I believe that the youth gathering was seen by our church, and by many others, as a panacea for the problem of youth involvement in church. It was hoped that this mountain top experience of going to Higher Ground would energize the youth of our congregation and motivate them in their spiritual lives.

However, this was not the case. Had we been less intent on the National Youth Gathering, we may have been able to provide many and varied opportunities for youth participation and spiritual growth. The over \$40,000 raised toward the national youth gathering might have been spent toward service projects, short-term mission trips, speakers, and most importantly, Bible study and evangelism.

One mountain top experience would have been replaced with myriad moments of faith and fellowship. A long climb up a mountain only leaves the climber a long slide down. However, a long, well planned journey provides opportunities for sights, sounds, and sensations often lacking in the heady void at a mountain peak.

...it is the journey, the long walk with Christ,....which is most necessary.

E-Newsletter from Synod Board of Youth Ministry

Servant Event Possibilities

youthEsource resource!

Consider Jesus' example regarding his disciples. For his three year earthly ministry, our Lord walked his disciples throughout the Holy Land, teaching them, requiring service of them, correcting them, and guiding them. When Jesus chose to take his disciples to mountain top experiences, often only a select few were invited. These experiences were intended to accent and illustrate the lessons and life Jesus lived at ground level. It was only at the end, when the time was right did Jesus lead them to the ultimate mountain top experience.

As you work with the youth of your congregation — perhaps in the midst of your planning for the Orlando youth gathering — do not forget that it is not the mountain top experiences in a young persons life that are important. Rather, it is the journey, the long walk with Christ, of taking part in the means of grace, service to others, sharing the joy of life in Jesus and encouraging one another in the faith which is most necessary.

—Steven Brummett, at Zion Lutheran Church in Snohomish, Washington
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Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

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.

Check Out Servant Event Possibilities

The Board of Youth ministry coordinates and helps to publicize Servant Events hosted by LC—MS congregations and groups. The new list for summer 2004 events is now available. Find out what possibilities there are for your group at dcs.lcms.org/youth/.

Want Some Ideas for Your Youth Program?

The Board of Youth Ministry for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with a grant from Thrivent started a new electronic youth ministry resource available for free on the internet. Check out www.youthesource.com/ The web page is not just for adults, but for youth too with a number of links to other great web sites. Pass it on to your own youth!

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