



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.

November 2004 - Volume 5, Issue 11

- Growing Yourself to Grow Others
- Youth Ministry Resources Available

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Growing Yourself to Grow Others

"How much time do you spend with or talking to your best friend?"

That's a question I often ask the youth at youth group. I follow it up with "How much time do you spend with or talking to God? If you spent that same amount of time with your best friend, would they still be your best friend?" There are two points to this exercise. One is we don't spend enough time with God. The other is that God is our best friend despite our lack of attention.

One day, I was stopped in my tracks by this thought. Why don't you ask these questions of yourself and your volunteer leaders? Are we abiding in Christ? That was a bit of an eye opener.

I started with myself. I examined my devotional life. It was sporadic. Often, when I did devotions, instead of applying it to myself I would think of how I could teach this to the youth. My devotion time actually turned into prep time for youth talks!

I was struck by John 15. Was I bearing fruit? I began to wonder. I was feeling burned out, stressed out, stretched too thin, and ineffective. "I think I've stumbled on to something," I exclaimed.

I share this with you to remind you of why you do this youth thing in the first place. You love these youth out of your response to God's love. Another reminder, it's hard to respond to God's love if you ignore it.

Our first priority is our relationship with God. If we fail to nurture that relationship, we are of little help to anyone else. How effective is your talk on the life changing love of Jesus Christ when your life is just as stressful and out of whack as everyone else's? Why should they listen to you? What have you got that they don't already have?

If there's only one thing I can share with youth workers, paid or volunteer, it is this. Don't let your ministry interfere with your relationship with God. Let your relationship with God fuel your ministry.

Notice that The Great Commission comes at the end of Matthew. Jesus did not expect His disciples to go out and teach about Him before they had a relationship

So how do I
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I spend time
with Him.

E-Newsletter
for you to use!

E-Source on
the web!

with Him, the risen Christ. He spent time with them, prayed with them, taught them. When they had a relationship with Him, they were ready to reach out to the world.

So how do I abide in Christ? Spend time with Him. It's as simple as that.

Read Scripture, pray, attend worship services regularly. No special resources are needed. God wants to enjoy your company and wants you to enjoy His company. Read Hebrews 12:2. Now consider that the "joy set before him" is spending eternity with you. Do you begin to understand how deeply God wants to be in relationship with you? That's it. That's the whole point.

Once you begin that relationship with God, the ministry flows naturally. Kids can see the love of God that is a part of you. All you really need to teach them is how they can get in on it, how to nurture a relationship with God. Give them a thriving life in Christ. The rest will come.

There are many resources out there to help. Here are just a few suggestions:

Christ Esteem by Don Matzat
The Hour That Changes the World by Dick Eastman
The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren
And, of course, *The Bible* by God

— Suzy Hennig, Youth Director at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Renton, Washington <youth@king-of-kings.org>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/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.

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.youthsource.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!

Some of the items currently on the web page deal with the subject of sports from the Bible's perspective. There's also an article about parents having to compete for time with their youth's schedules. There are even some youth reviews of current movies. Check it out!

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