



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.

February 2005 - Volume 6, Issue 2

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"Chopper from God"

I once read in a major publication that deals with youth ministry, that the average span of ministry for professional and volunteer youth workers is about two years. Two years! Talk about a profession where burnout and lack of support can have a devastating effect on your health and well being—not to mention your sense of self worth!

Have you ever thought about the reason that you have gotten involved in youth ministry? I'm sure it isn't for the money. And it certainly can't be for the power and prestige!

Why am I in youth ministry? Sometimes I can't tell you the answer to that. Honestly, I am so involved in dealing with the politics of the church, rewriting this week's crummy Sunday school lesson, or dealing with rumors of disgruntled parents, that I forget why I am doing what I do. I'll admit it. I'm human. I am often so focused on the business side of youth ministry that I often forget about the ministry aspect of youth ministry. Sometimes I'll ask myself, "Why am I here doing this?"

Sometimes other things get in the way of being able to focus on what you had hoped to accomplish on Thursday morning. We have a lot of crime in the neighborhood in which my church is located. Our riding lawnmower was stolen out of its metal shed on our church property. Gas was siphoned out of the church van. Three times. One time the church van was stolen, and we didn't notice for two days! People love to drop off stolen cars in our parking lot. As a matter of fact, they like to leave all kinds of trash and beer bottles and just plain junk on our property.

I drove into my church parking lot one Thursday morning, and I saw the gentleman who mows our lawn waving me over to him. I went to see him, and he pointed me in the direction of something in the bushes. It was a motorcycle frame and wheels, obviously stolen, that had been dumped on our property.

Man, more garbage dumped on our church lawn! Vacation Bible School was three days away, and we had a dangerous piece of scrap metal that the kids would more than love to pretend to ride. We called the police, and they said there was no serial number on the frame, and no way to trace ownership of the motorcycle, so it was the church's problem. Great!

In desperation, I called one of the families in our church that I knew worked with motorcycles. The dad was a painter, an airbrush artist who painted designs on custom motorcycles and choppers. When I told the mom that we had a chopper frame on our property and asked her if she or her husband knew of anybody who could use a motorcycle frame, she got quiet, and then a little giddy. She sent her husband and son to some over and look at the chopper frame.

I wasn't sure what to expect, but when her husband and son arrived at the church,

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their eyes were as big as half-dollars. They loaded the frame on the back of their truck without much of a word and went on their way.

The next day the mom called me and thanked me for calling her. She told me that she had been so giddy the day before, because she had been praying that God would provide her family the means to build a chopper. And I had helped.

They came up with a name for the new motorcycle they were about to build. They're going to call it the "Chopper from God." Already, this piece of cast off junk has become a witnessing tool for the family. They have told coworkers, friends, anyone who will listen about the "Chopper from God." The story has even made its way around the bike rally in Sturgis, North Dakota.

What does a stolen motorcycle have to do with youth ministry? Plenty! There will be times in your ministry when you are dealing with a lot of garbage. You will be dealing with things that have no apparent relationship to your ministry. But God has a different plan. He has placed you in your ministry because he has plans for you.

Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us of this: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

God has a way of making even that which we think should be discarded important and precious.

Why am I in youth ministry? Because I get to share the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with a group of people that many adults think are worthless. If I can be the reason that only one kid comes to God through Christ, then the hours, the difficulties with parents, the low pay, and the other garbage I have to deal with are worth it.

Plus, when the "Chopper from God" is finished, I get to ride it around the parking lot of the church!

—Matt Byrd, Youth Worker at Light of Christ Lutheran Church in Federal Way, Washington. <youthguymatt@comcast.net>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

Servant Event
Possibilities

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 2005 events is now available. Find out what possibilities there are for your group at <dcs.lcms.org/youth>.

youthEsource
resource!

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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