



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.

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The Lord *IS* Using You!

How many times do you worry about your youth? And how many times do you worry about the youth that you *don't* work with – the ones that aren't coming or don't seem to care, the ones that you can't reach? Are you beating yourself up because you “don't have enough youth” in your group or ministry?

Sometimes I think we can make ourselves depressed when we think about all the kids that we haven't reached or that we can't seem to get involved in our youth programs. I know that I can get very discouraged when I think about those kids. But I also realize that feeling bad and moaning about lack of attendance doesn't help the kids who *are* present to grow in their faith.

The fact is that no single person can reach everyone with the Gospel. Even Jesus didn't spend His years of ministry on earth trying to teach everything to everyone. Instead, He spent some quality time with twelve disciples (twelve being a number that is really great for a youth group in most churches). And even with the twelve, He spent extra time with Peter, James and John, discipling them in a way that went beyond His relationship with the other nine.

We could learn from Jesus' example to concentrate on the kids we can reach and not let those we can't reach affect our attitude towards ministry. Keep in mind that *your ministry is more than would take place if you weren't there*. As a part time youth worker, I know that there is always more youth ministry to do. I could get myself all worked up about the kids that are on the fringes of our church and that I don't have the time to reach. But I try to keep in mind that without me here, a number of our teens would not be involved in youth ministry of any kind. I'm trying to teach and disciple my “twelve”.

Once a rich young man came to Jesus with some questions. (Matt. 19:15ff and Mk. 10:16ff) When the answers Jesus gave him were too hard for him, the young man went away sad. The gospels don't tell us that Jesus ran after this young man or that He worried and got depressed about him or that His anxiety about the rich young man detracted from His relationship with His disciples. In fact, Jesus used the example of this young man as an opportunity to teach the twelve. Jesus let that young person walk away of his own choice and concentrated on those He had. I try to let

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myself learn from Jesus that I need to teach those that I can, that the youth He's entrusted to me are my area of ministry.

When you are with your "twelve", or maybe it's your "three," you are serving God by being with those teens. You model Christ to them as you fill the roles of chaperone, chauffeur, organizer, teacher, mentor, listener, parent, and friend. In 1 Cor. 9:19-22, Paul tells us of becoming "all things to all men" so that he might save *some*. He doesn't say that we will save all people or that by becoming the chauffeur, etc. we will reach every possible kid. We will reach *some*.

So let's stop beating ourselves up when we think about the numbers in our youth ministries. Let's praise God for the kids that do come, the kids we are reaching, the kids whose lives are significantly better because we have answered Christ's call to work with teens. We should keep in mind the words of 1 Cor. 4: "Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart...For God...made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ...For our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

You are a blessing to the youth around you and God's ambassadors for His Son to those that He has given to you. May you continued to be blessed in all your efforts in youth ministry!

—Kelly Bailey McCray, Dir. Youth Ministry, Trinity Lutheran Church, Bend,
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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.

Kaleidoscope on the Hood Canal

This year's K-Scope is scheduled for July 9-14 at the Christ Lutheran Retreat Center on the Olympic Peninsula near Belfair, Washington. This creative adventure in living the Christian community is a six-day experience in spiritual growth for high school youth of the Northwest District. Contact Rev. John Schmidt at <KScopeNOW@cs.com> or at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington, (253)584-2565. The event is limited to 35 participants. Cost is \$150.

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