



A service of the
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Youth Supports

A resource to encourage and empower youth leaders for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom.

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- Not Just FOR, but WITH!
- Youth Ministry Resources

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Not Just FOR, but WITH!

One of the biggest struggles of parenthood and youth work revolves around doing things FOR your kids. This is not an uncommon practice in most households or churches. From the time our children are little we feed, carry, tie their shoes for them, and are doing other tasks for which they are not ready. This trend continues as children move into elementary school where parents build entire solar systems or “show” them the right way to do a math problem. Yet while this “doing for” is done with the best of intentions, it often demonstrates to children and youth that not only can't they do something, they never will be able. As children begin to mature physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, it is imperative that as parents and youth leaders we begin to move away from *doing for* our kids toward *doing with* our kids.

Doing *with* implies that I'm not going to simply build the solar system for my daughter. Rather I will help her to plan out how she wants to build one, help her to decide on the materials and encourage her as she builds it. The same thing goes regarding faith. I cannot believe Jesus Christ for my daughter. Instead I help her to learn to use and read her Bible, I discuss with her theological questions, and I give her spiritual comfort. As I do these things I am working with her so that she learns and grows in the faith rather than simply doing it for her. Eventually, when the time is right, by my having done these things my daughter will be able to stand firm in the faith which is hers and be prepared to face the struggles of life which lie ahead.

This then is an important lesson for youth workers and parents regarding youth in the church. As youth begin involvement in our youth group it is necessary that we as workers and parents plan, prepare and put into practice studies, activities, and events for the benefit of our youth. However as our youth grow in faith and understanding it is important to begin including them in the planning and preparation of activities. It is necessary however that this goes beyond simply

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Ideas for Your Youth Program?

asking them what they would like to do. Rather as workers and parents we take these youth under our wings, perhaps teaching them how to plan and prepare a Bible study. Perhaps we use them to help us make phone calls, create sign ups, develop itineraries. By doing these things *with* rather than *for* our youth we encourage them to take active roles in our youth group and our church and we prepare them to be active servants (lay, commissioned or ordained) within the congregation.

This is not a new thing! This is the same pattern that our Savior followed with His disciples. After selecting the twelve, Jesus did most things *for* them. He fed multitudes, he healed multitudes, he taught multitudes all the while his disciples stood and watched. Yet as they matured in faith and grew through His Words Jesus began working with them giving them small, but important, tasks in his overall ministry. Finally upon Jesus ascension his disciples were prepared to take on the very tasks that Jesus originally did for them.

Therefore as you labor for the Lord regarding the youth of your church review your efforts. Consider whether your youth ministry is *doing for* them or *doing with* them. Consider what steps you can take to begin *doing with* your youth, enabling them to eventually do the same in their service to the Lord.

—Steven Brummett, Director of Christian Education, Zion Lutheran Church – Snohomish, WA. <ziodce@verizon.net>

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!

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