



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.

December 2006 - Volume 7, Issue 12

- “In the interest of full disclosure...”
- Youth Ministry Resources

...I, too, their youth leader, have done things so awful that it would make their parents shriek!

But when your 14 year old walks up to you and asks if you ever smoked marijuana...

“In the interest of full disclosure...”

What an odd statement, “In the interest of full disclosure...” Before I go to work in the morning I often hear Matt Lauer from NBC’s *Today Show* state this immediately after he plugs a new company run by *GE* or a new television show that airs on *NBC*. However full disclosure, is not so much about television as it is about me.

What should I tell my youth about my life?

Do I tell them that I started dating in junior high school? Do I tell them that I like to play table shuffleboard? I read so many books, hear so many speakers, and become so overwhelmed with the number of people telling me that I should be completely honest with the youth — that I should help them to learn about life through my experiences. I agree that youth need to hear that it is okay to mess up, that God works through my stupidity, and that yes, I too, their youth leader, have done things so awful that it would make their parents shriek!

Have I ever questioned my faith? Have I ever wanted to go too far with a girl? Was I ever really a teenager? I long to help the youth learn from me and my mistakes along the way. Anyone who cares about youth longs to never have their youth have to experience the same mistakes they made and regretted when they were kids growing up. But when your 14 year old walks up to you and asks if you ever smoked marijuana are you going to say yes, no, or stare at them like a deer in the headlights?

I was taught in college a question that we should say in response to probing questions that will often make sailors blush, but are questions that youth really want to know the answer too; “Why do you want to know?”

Say a 4 year old walks up and asks, “Where do babies come from?”

You freeze at first, but then remember the question and ask, “Why do you want to know?”

They respond with, “Cause I saw a bird taking *Dumbo* to his mommy in the movie and I wanted to know if a bird could really carry him.”

...you want
them to know
God inside and
out, not you.

You let out a big sigh of relief as you realize your 4 year old is still innocent and that you spared yourself the choking hazard of having to spit out a scientific answer to a precious little girl that just wanted to know if a stork could really handle the payload of a 300 pound baby elephant.

We need to protect ourselves and our memories as well as the innocence of the youth. We need to establish a line of what is personal — things they do and *do not* need to know. For example, the youth *don't* need to know that you drank 8 Coors Light on your 17th birthday with your friends and got so smashed that you puked in your friend's hatchback. But it might be all right for your youth to discover that you did drink before you were of age, what the repercussions were, and why it is a bad decision.

Some things are better kept secret from your youth, not because you don't want to be honest with them, but because they do not need to know your entire history. If they know that you got drunk and had huge ramifications because of your actions, that is learning enough for them.

Youth want to know that you had struggles when you were growing up too, and they want to know how you faced those struggles, that sometimes you made bad decisions, but that ultimately you grew up, dealt with those decisions you made, and are living through them. Show them that God can work through the sins of man and that He still loves them. When it comes down to it, you want them to know *God* inside and out, not you. So point them to *His* grace and what He has done in your life and what He is doing in theirs.

—Michael Matson, Director of Christian Education, Christ Lutheran Church – Meridian, ID. <mikethedce@gmail.com>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

E-Newsletter
from Synod

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.

Ideas for Your
Youth
Program?

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!

Except as noted, all text and photographs are © Northwest District of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod. All contents, except as noted, may be duplicated for use in local congregations as long as the source is noted. If you have any comments or responses for this publication, please contact Glenn Zander, 2142 NE McDonald Lane, McMinnville, OR 97128 <forgivn@stjohnmac.org>