



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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- Emerging Youth Ministry
- Youth Ministry Resources

Emerging Youth Ministry

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The world is changing. This should not shock anyone. This change is coming faster than ever before. Do you remember life before a lap top computer? Before a Cell phone? Before E-mail? We're only talking about 15 years here. Amidst all this change, youth ministry in many churches has not changed. Why not? Our culture is emerging into a postmodern world; its time youth ministry in our churches caught up. After 10 years in the DCE ministry I realized that I needed to change and catch up with the times. I realized the minds, attitudes, and culture of teens has changed, and I didn't want it to pass me by. This past summer I decided to do something about it, so I enrolled in the DMin program in *Leadership in the Emerging Culture* at George Fox Seminary in Portland. I have a long way to go, but I have learned a life's time worth of ideas, and concepts. I know that Emerging Church and Postmodernism should not be dirty words, but images of the future. The future of youth ministry will be through a missional mindset, relational experiences, and incarnational ministries.

Mission trips have been a part of youth ministry for decades. The emerging youth ministry goes beyond mission trips and becomes truly missional. This means we see our own communities as mission fields. This simple shift in philosophy changes how we plan youth meetings, worship experiences, evangelism, outreach and community. Like a missionary going into a new culture, you must learn the language, customs, and stories of the people you wish to minister to—before you begin. Missionaries go out into the world bringing Jesus to where people are, translating the Gospel into the native language. Our churches have become too attractational. We desire to attract people to us, rather than go to them. Emerging youth ministry goes out into the local community.

This is best accomplished through relationships. Nothing new here, right? The emerging church movement would suggest our motivations in relationships

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should change. Too often we build relationships in order to share the Gospel. What's wrong with that? The problem is we are constantly looking for our opportunity to bring up Jesus, attempting to steer conversations towards the church, hoping ultimately to manipulate people to becoming like we are. The postmodern mind will see right through this. Teenagers today do not need another phony relationship. They desire friends for friends' sake. To be relational today is to love people for the sake of loving people, with no self-centered motivations. "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

Finally we need to be incarnational. Jesus was the word of God made flesh. This is what it means to be incarnational: to be the word of God in action. If our desire in youth ministry is to transform lives, then our lives must first be transformed. Jesus should be the center of everything we do. His love should manifest itself in our lives. St. Francis of Assisi said it best: "Preach the Gospel always, if necessary use words." If you want teenagers to read the Bible more, than you need to read your Bible more. If you want them to love their neighbors as their selves, then you need to love. Jesus never asked his disciples to do anything he wasn't willing to do first. Should our ministry be any different?

I pray that my life might be transformed, that I might be blessed by God and be a blessing for others. I pray the same for you.

—Joel Dietrich, Director of Christian Education, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA. <pickle@oslc.com>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

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!

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.

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