



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.

August 2007 - Volume 8, Issue 8

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## Youth Are Members of the Body Today!

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We are currently developing a new worship service in our congregation. It is a worship service that some would describe as "emerging", "postmodern", "edgy", and/or any number of other cool-sounding but quickly tiresome adjectives. Our desire is that we would speak the Gospel of Jesus Christ clearly in the language of younger generations, but if there's any label I don't want to attach to this new service, it's "a youth service." Sure, it may use more of the language of youth and young adults, but it will most certainly be open to everyone. Our planning team has youth and young adults on it, but also 30-somethings and grandparents. Youth will be an important part of this new service, but our hope is that they will not be the only part.

I have often heard the phrase "youth are the future of the church." While I understand the sentiment behind the statement-that today's youth are the ones who will be the formal leaders of the church in the future-I've always had a strong aversion to it because it can quickly lead to the generational segregation of a congregation. We in Lutheran circles like to speak of corporate worship as multigenerational. (Did I just do that in my opening?) While that may be true to some extent, the reality is that much of the church's culture far too often sees youth as a subculture unto themselves. Youth have their own weekly programming, their own special events, their own fundraising (while the rest of the church's ministry is funded by general offerings), and even their own worship services.

This bubble-effect is sometimes described as a "Mickey Mouse" approach since youth ministry can feel like an "ear" simply stuck on to the rest of the congregation-connected in name, but in reality off in their own little bubble. There is certainly a place for age-appropriate ministry, which is good not only for youth but for all ages in a congregation. Yet there is also a need for generations to connect; not artificially, but in ways that allow youth to be mentored while also contributing their God-given skills and passions today.

Though I'm no longer working full-time overseeing a youth ministry within a congregation, I am privileged to work with youth on a regular basis. My work in the areas of corporate worship and technology allows me to connect with youth in many areas such as worship music and tech teams, audio/video production, blogging, and more. My work outside of our local church connects me with youth and youth workers through the Internet and in larger youth gatherings, retreats, and events. I'm glad that I don't have to have the title of "Youth Minister" or "Youth

I pray that this can be an encouragement...to keep holding up our youth...as part of the present.

Ideas for your youth program!

E-Newsletter from Synod Board of Youth Ministry

Leader” to be involved in youth ministry in our congregation, nor in the church-at-large.

As youth workers, many of you are likely advocates for a holistic (I wish that word were spelled “wholistic”; I much prefer a sense of the “whole” than a sense of the “hole”!) approach to youth ministry, where it is not simply a Mickey Mouse ear, but is well integrated into the life of the congregation. If you are in a church where that is a struggle, I pray that this can be an encouragement to you to keep working for it; to keep holding up our youth as not just “the future” but as part of the present. They are members of the body of Christ who right now may not be the mouth, with an official voice, or the shoulder, bearing a large amount of weight, but members nonetheless who are critical to the full life of the body today, not just in the future.

For reflection: I like to not simply throw out information to you, but allow the opportunity for you to share your thoughts, comments and reactions with me and others. Where are you at right now in your church situation? Do you feel like your congregation does well at integrating youth into its life? What are your successes and obstacles in this area? How can we "non-official" youth workers stand with you to help? Feel free to share your thoughts and reactions with me by email or comment on my blog.

—Michael Schutz is the Minister of Worship at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley, WA. He works primarily in the areas of worship arts (music, audio and visual arts, etc.), technology, and communications. He is blessed to be a husband and a daddy of two young daughters. Michael's email address is [mschutz@redeemerlive.org](mailto:mschutz@redeemerlive.org) and he blogs at [redeemerlive.org](http://redeemerlive.org). He likes the opportunity to dialogue, and invites you to email or visit his blog to comment on this and other church life topics.

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

[http://www.nowlcms.org/educational\\_services//YouthSupports.aspx](http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services//YouthSupports.aspx)

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### 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/](http://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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### 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/eneews/> and follow the directions.

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