



A service of the
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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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"I just wanted to thank you for putting up with me on this trip."

Now...I see a girl who loves herself.

Being Pipelines of God's Grace

I have an appointment with Sarah this afternoon-she and I will meet over sugary caffeinated drinks (probably topped with whipped cream) to talk about life. Life for Sarah hasn't been easy.

I met Sarah three years ago. She had just been confirmed at our church and was about to enter the high school youth ministry. It was rare to catch a glimpse of her smile. She was continually apologizing for everything she did. She could barely look me in the eye when we talked. Her father was very critical of her. Her family had moved from one side of the country to another several times in search of jobs that did not seem to work out. Sarah was lonely and felt insignificant.

That summer we took a small group of youth on a hiking & camping trip in Denali National Park. She and another youth leader were hiking in front of me, and I overheard Sarah say:

"I just wanted to thank you for putting up with me on this trip. I know you guys must not like me being around, I can be kind of annoying."

That's where it began for Sarah. In those few days we saw something stirring in Sarah. From a few words of encouragement from a youth leader, she started to see herself the way Jesus does, as His beloved child.

In the next few years Sarah became a fixture in the high school youth ministry. She was an active player in everything she could make time for. Her kind heart and servant nature led her to volunteer at the church, mowing lawns & shoveling snow. She was helping friends make good choices and in her quiet, subtle way she was sharing the love of Jesus. Now, when I look into her eyes I don't see hopelessness and despair. I see a girl who loves herself.

Today I will meet with Sarah to talk about life, which right now has been destroyed by an affair in her parents' marriage. Her family is once again in crisis. What has been most incredible about the last few years with Sarah is the relationships that have been built that continue to support her. The conversations that she's had with youth leaders and with other youth have been a constant source

May you be
the eyes,
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world.

Ideas for
your youth
program!

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of strength for her—simply because people have taken the time. The heart of Jesus has been lived out by taking a broken teenage girl and surrounding her with adults and youth that love her and show her that she has value. She may not know how to find all the books of the Bible, and she has a lot of questions to be answered, but she knows that there is a place where she belongs—with God's people.

I have no great words of wisdom for Sarah as I meet with her this afternoon; however I know that God will take those moments spent with Sarah to show her that someone out there cares about her - that He cares for her. As she tells her stories she will know that God is hearing her, crying with her, and walking with her.

May you know that the relationships you build with youth will give comfort and guidance in times of crisis. May you be the eyes, ear, hands, and feet of Jesus to a broken world.

-Tia Pugh, Director of Christian Education, Zion Lutheran Church, Fairbanks, Alaska <dce@zionfairbanks.org>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

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 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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