



A service of the
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Missouri Synod

Youth Supports

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

December 2008 - Volume 9, Issue 12

- All That's Ooey-Gooley
- Free youth ministry resources!

[We] spent a cozy night ripping out the innards of a pumpkin...

Talked to yourself?

All That's Ooey-Gooley

This time of year has always had an air about it. Something about the smell of the freshly-fallen snow and smoke from chimneys, the silence of the dark nights and the glistening of the stars cause me to slow down a bit. I know it's difficult for a professional church worker to *slow down* during Advent what with all the special services, decorations and dinners. But isn't that precisely what this season is for?

Not too long ago my husband and I spent a cozy night at home ripping out the innards of a pumpkin-one of my favorite things to do! All the yuck inside the pumpkin has to be removed in order to do wonderful things like carving a silly face or, even better, making a pie.

Many of you have heard the how-a-jack-o-lantern-is-like-a-Christian story and that's not where I'm going. Take a look at what David writes in Psalm 103:

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits... (verses 1-2)

Obviously, David isn't referring to the guts of a gourd, he's talking to himself. Have you ever done that before? Talked to yourself? Referred to yourself in the third person? It's okay if you do-I have! Regardless, we can take a lot from these two verses. The first verse says that everything in your entire being should praise God. So... what-all is within you?

So, slow down. Take a moment. Get out a piece of paper, a pen and time yourself for the next 60 seconds. In that amount of time, write down everything you can think of that's part of you. Write down your thoughts and feelings:

- Your fears for the future.
- Your love for the people around you.
- Your aggravation with yourself.
- Your exasperation with your youth, but your love for them too.
- Your talents.
- The household chore you despise.
- That time you tortured the cat when you were nine, which you now deeply

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Free
resources for
youth
ministry!

Free
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Ministry!

regret.

- Your favorite TV show.
- The realization that you'll never skate in the X games.
- The book you're planning to write.
- The needy people you know.

Done?

Look back at what you've written in just one minute. God wants to connect with ALL of it-and this is where the “benefits” come in. If there's sin, he wants to forgive it. If there's pain, he wants to comfort. If there's excitement, he wants to enjoy it with you!

If you continue reading in this psalm, David goes into details about these benefits saying, “[He] who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.” Upon first reading, it sounds like God is showing His love and compassion to us. Perhaps He is but a person is typically “crowned” in order to serve others-like a king or queen. So maybe we receive His love and that empowers us to show His love to others, like the youth and families in our congregations.

Ultimately, we should never be afraid to share *all our inmost beings* with God. Whether it's good or bad, silly or sad, He wants it all. He wants all of us, the whole shebang. Take time this Advent season to remember that He wants to share His love with us, so we can share it with others.

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Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

Want Some Ideas for Your Youth Ministry?

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. The November site included a four part Bible study on Jesus and culture and an article on how to respond to the issue of homosexuality.

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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