



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.

February 2008 - Volume 9, Issue 2

- The Surefire Way to Succeed in Ministry
- **“Consider the Call” Retreat**

The Surefire Way to Succeed in Ministry

Did that title draw you in because you are seeing ministry much like a card house, and the wind is beginning to blow, or are you reading this with a bit of skepticism, because no one has a surefire answer to success in ministry? Either way, thanks for taking a look. The longer I've been in ministry the more I realize I don't have all the answers, in fact my list of questions is growing.

I was meeting with a group of youth workers who were talking about creating a mentoring program for youth workers. The goal is to help vocational youth workers succeed in longevity. The idea is to pair a seasoned youth workers (5 years or more) with a new to ministry youth worker. A comment that was made during our discussion was that it may be tough because students just out of school think they have ministry all figured out. The truth is they do have a lot of ideas. They've sat in classrooms absorbing all kinds of ideas about how to program, counsel, and relate to the church body and youth culture. They explode into the church with creativity and enthusiasm. Some ideas are great while others fall flat. The measurement for success is often based on how many kids were involved. But success is more than numbers or how you felt about the event/program.

Here is my sure fire way to succeed in ministry: become a student. I don't mean become *like* a student. You don't have to dress like them, talk like them, etc. In fact kids respond to you more when you *are* a student; listen, observe, study, practice. It doesn't matter how young or old you are, these are the keys to success. I know the skills but often fail to use them. We often don't succeed because we didn't do our homework. Whether you are a volunteer or a full-time minister doesn't matter. We all struggle with the issue of time. Being a student requires an investment. I need to be in the Word as a student. What is God telling me about who I am, and what the church should be? I need to become a student in prayer. Am I listening, and observing what God is doing, or am I just telling Him what I want? I need to live as a student in my community. What are the needs in my community, and what does God seem to be doing locally? I need to be a student in my congregation. How has God gifted the local body? Does He seem to be placing a particular thought on the hearts of believers? I need to be a student of students. Do I know what's going on at school, home, and on a personal level with individuals? The questions go on and on, but that's where the answers are found that will direct you and your ministry. Successful ministry is discovered by being a student. Every time I think I have it figured out, God reminds me to listen, observe, study, and practice.

I need to be
in the Word
as a student.

I need to be
a student
in prayer ...
in my
community ...
in my
congregation
...
of students

Jesus
changes
lives.

"Consider the
Call"
Retreat
at Concordia
University,
Portland,
Oregon

The latest youth fad or fashion is eventually forgotten. Ministry programs come and go. I've found that some of my great ministry plans fail, not because they weren't good but because I needed to learn something. Funny how time and energy is invested to help kids know and understand God, and maybe God's plan was to help me know and understand something about Him. God never called me to great programs. He called me to faithfully follow where He is leading. How do I know where He's leading if I'm not a student? How do I care about the needs of others if I am not broken?

If you find yourself looking at ministry like a card house, and the wind is beginning to blow, it's O.K. Ministry is about life transformation and you can't do that. Jesus changes lives. The question is what is He doing in yours, and what is He doing in the lives of people around you? To answer that you will have to become a student again. The great thing is you don't have to teach about life transformation when kids see it happening. Do you want to succeed in ministry? Become a student.

-Clark Leighton, Director of Family Ministries, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Portland, OR <clark@bslc.com> Clark has served in full time ministry for 18 years including 12 years at Beautiful Savior Lutheran

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

"Consider the Call" Retreat

3/7/08 : 3 PM - 3/-9 Noon at

Concordia University and Fireside Retreat Center

Are you considering a ministry career? Join us as we explore the unique Call God may be placing on your life!

CONSIDER THE CALL

Is God calling you to be... ..a Pastor? ...a Director of Christian Education (DCE)? ...a Lutheran School Teacher? ...a Missionary?

Do you have a heart for serving God's people?

Have you considered a career in church work?

If so, you are invited and encouraged to attend an incredible weekend where you'll have the opportunity to meet with Concordia faculty, staff, and students - Pastors, DCEs, Lutheran School Teachers, and those pursuing church work careers. Ask questions, learn, and explore the unique Call God has placed on your heart!

For more information or to register, contact Sarah Elliott at 503-493-6231 or selliott@cu-portland.edu.

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