



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.

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- "I Helped."
- **Free youth ministry resources!**

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statistic this
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changed my
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But now I've
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"I helped."

I read a statistic this week that changed my life.

The combined annual budgets for the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and Habitat for Humanity is less than the money Americans spent on Christmas candy this year.

In other words, if we had redirected our candy cane fund, the charities that help American Health, Hearts and Homes could have been doubled.

That's sick. I didn't eat a single piece of candy this season without thinking of people without homes. It was like the chocolate was made with sour milk...

I haven't always been this way. When I was a kid, I noticed there was a conspiracy to hijack Halloween by making kids collect money for UNICEF instead of candy. Nobody in 1970s Indiana bought it – we saw it for what it was: a plot by evil dentists to get kids to stop eating so much candy. Since then, I've been suspicious of people who try to suck the fun out of holidays.

But now I've become one of them.

Well, not really. But I would ask you to consider making a donation to a worthy cause in this Epiphany season in the same amount you received in "Christmas garbage." We all know what that would be – the gifts that automatically enter the white elephant pile for the following year. Beyond that, instead of using the money for returned items or books, DVDs, or gift cards you don't need, take that money and make a donation in that person's name to a worthy cause. So you all are on notice - if you get me a tie, a pair of socks, or even a Dunder Mifflin Calendar, I'm taking it back and donating that money to Invisible Children.

Naturally,
there are
thousands of
worthy
causes...

Free
resources for
youth
ministry!

Free
newsletter
from the
Board of
Youth
Ministry!

I know you all kept the Christ in Christmas. I know you cheerfully gave thoughtful Christmas presents to loved ones. We give because God gave us the Christmas gift of his son, of forgiveness, of eternal life, of Immanuel. But remember that 12 pound bag of candy canes, those Life Savers books, that tin of three kinds of bad popcorn? Add it up and send a donation to:

- Camp Restore, the Lutheran group rebuilding homes for Katrina victims;
- Thrivent Builds, the Lutheran wing of Habitat for Humanity;
- Lutheran World Relief, helping disaster victims the world over.

Naturally, there are thousands of worthy causes – these three are close to my heart. The point is, if a parent, a youth or a coworker asks you what you did for Christmas, the answer should be simple:

“I helped.”

—*Tim Ihssen, Director of Christian Education, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington* (beeflips@oslc.com)

Ed.: Tim has the URLs for some suggestions for you:

Invisible Children: <http://www.invisiblechildren.com/home.php>

Camp Restore: <http://www.camprestore.org/Index.asp?PageID=7280>

Thrivent Builds: <http://www.thriventbuilds.com/>

LWR: <http://www.lwr.org/>

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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