



A service of the
Northwest District
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Youth Supports

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

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- Seeds of Success
- Senior High Youth Gathering Oct. 2-4

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Seeds of Success

Often times we are drawn to youth ministry for a variety of reasons but primarily because we have a calling to the youth demographic and possess the gifts required to touch their lives. Whether we are trained DCE/Youth ministers or moms/dads, or concerned adults, we all want success in our ministry. Yet the question often is, "How do we define success in youth ministry?" Is it the number kids in your ministry, or the involvement of kids in ministry or some other measurement? I personally have been in youth ministry for only 8 years, so I do not claim to be an expert, yet my view of success may seem alternative.

I believe in Jesus Christ's plan. Christ spent time intimately with 12 regular guys ranging in age from 17 to 50 plus years old. In doing so Christ invested three years in the lives of these 12, and the Kingdom of God two thousand years later has as many as two billion believers. Like Jesus, I believe the key to successful ministry is to identify a few gifted youth who can be nurtured into Disciples of Christ and equip them to touch the lives of other youth around them. Though you are investing in the lives 10 to 15 youth, those youth in turn nurture 5 to 10 other youth, thereby growing your youth ministry exponentially.

Though we may try, as humans we can only truly connect and have meaningful relationships with 30 -50 individuals at any given time. After taking into account all other relationships (family, co workers, friend), we have just a handful left. So the first step is to identify the individuals in your ministry that have a burning desire to strengthen their relationship with God. Upon identifying those core youth, build an authentic relationship with them where they as individuals are valued beyond their spiritual knowledge. Like Christ, it is easier to work with seeds in fertile soil than that on the path or rocks. When you invest in their lives, nurture them and challenge them in their faith journey, you equip them with the Word of God.

This process does not produce results overnight. It takes a few years as youth

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cycle in and out. You will see the youth experience spiritual highs and lows. In all you are there to encourage them always to remember that you are neither their parent nor their conscience, but rather a mentor and friend. It is important to remember that as you invest in their lives, they will be open with you and share their hearts with you. There is a temptation to either fix their lives or do something to change their circumstances (that is what parents are for), but your role is to be more of a sounding board and friend.

You will see your youth evolve before your eyes from immature yet talented young teens to being key leaders in your ministry and a key part of your youth ministry success. This is an ongoing process that is going to be repeated over and over again. Every year you are going to lose some of these leaders to college, careers and other responsibilities and every year God will provide new eager students to develop into disciples. And each year you will invest into their lives with a meaningful and authentic relationship that is centered on the word of God and driven by the work of the Holy Spirit and strengthened by your relationship with Jesus.

— *Kanagasabai Umashankar* (“Uma”), *Director of Christian Education, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, OR* (family@trinityhillsboro.com)

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

Free ideas
for youth
ministry!

*The Real
World
Senior High
Gathering*

E-
Newsletter!

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.

Northwest District Senior High Youth Gathering!

The Northwest District Senior High Youth Gathering is coming up soon. It's scheduled for October 2-4 at the Washington Family Ranch in Antelope, OR. For more information contact Jeff Kranich at jkranich@hopesseattle.org. The theme is *The Real World*.

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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