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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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- Reclaiming the Rock
- **Web sources of ideas for youth ministry**

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Reclaiming the Rock

For many, these are trying times in ministry. It seems that there are both more frequent and more intense objections being made to the presence of Christianity in public places. There are growing varieties and numbers of "alternative" faith systems being formed and tossed out for people to consider, based more heavily on coffee-shop philosophy than on Biblical truth. And even the sacred space of Sunday morning, so long exempt from encroachment by the world, has been showing serious signs of erosion as soccer and baseball fields are in high demand and so have become harder to schedule during the week and weekend. As a result we begin to hear that even many of our Church families are committed to Sunday morning sports events instead of Sunday morning worship.

As attendance figures waffle and concerns mount, we find ourselves trying to work longer, or harder, or more effectively at creating ministry offerings that are "attractive" enough to reclaim some of those who used to participate more regularly with us in Church-sponsored events. And in the process we wake up one day to realize that the candle we have been burning at both ends is suddenly also burning in the middle. This is not good. At this pace, sooner or later, the candle is going to burn out. This can be a very discouraging place to be and can make you wonder if ministry is really what you have been called to.

So what to do? Maybe it's time to step back, take a breath, and check your feet. More often than not, when I find myself standing in a growing wax puddle (from an excessively burning candle) I find that somewhere along the way I have inadvertently stepped off the "Rock" of my salvation and into the gravel of my own fears and doubts. Psalm 1:1-3 is always a good reminder to me of where I should be planted, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in

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the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”

God's Word is a constant and dependable source of strength, comfort, and peace. It feeds our souls and empowers us for ministry. If we stay close to God through His Word he can sustain us. But if Satan can casually manage to guide us away from that vital source of spiritual nourishment and then get us to pridefully depend on our human gifts and abilities rather than on God's strength and guidance in the Bible, then he knows that we will eventually weaken and fall. And so I am grateful for trusted Christian friends who recognize when I have gone “off-track” and are not afraid to remind me to get back to the Word. In the most trying hours of ministry I am reminded by passages like Psalm 62:5-8, “For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.”

It's hard to share what you don't have yourself. And it's hard to hear God's voice if you're not involved in the conversation. Make sure to dedicate or rededicate yourself to spending time every day reading, marking, and inwardly digesting (Props to Brother Martin) the content of God's precious book, the Bible. I guarantee that you will be strengthened for ministry, and empowered to better serve those whom God has entrusted to your care.

— *Jeff Kranich, Director of Christian Education, Hope Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA* (jkranich@hopeseattle.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.

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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