



A service of the  
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of the  
Lutheran Church -  
Missouri Synod

# Youth Supports

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

December 2009 - Volume 10, Issue 12

- Using the Gospel in Word and Relationships
- **Web sources of ideas for youth ministry**

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## Using the Gospel in Word and Relationships

Merton Strommen once shared a couple of stories and some research that apply to working with youth and remind us that the power in youth ministry is in God's grace spoken and lived out in our relationships.

One of the stories is about young kindergarten teacher living in Minnesota. One wintry afternoon she spent about 10 minutes helping a kindergarten student to get his boots on over his regular shoes. The task was not easy. The wiry legs of the child did not allow much use of direct force to get the boots on. Once both boots were on, the child spoke up. "These aren't my boots." The teacher held back her frustration, but proceeded to take the boots off the child. The shoes came off with the boots of course and had to be put back on the child. Once the child's shoes were back on, the child again spoke up. "These aren't my boots. They are my brother's, but my mommy makes me wear them anyway." At that point the teacher wanted very much to strangle the child.

The other story is about two high school boys who were good friends. They both belonged to their own church's youth group. One was Lutheran. One wasn't. Both young men had some doubts about the Bible being God's Word. Both young men expressed their doubt about the Bible being God's Word at their own youth group meetings. The young man from the non-Lutheran youth group was verbally assaulted. "What do you mean you don't believe the Bible is God's Word?!" When the Lutheran young man expressed his doubts, no one made a very big deal about the matter. They continued to treat him with respect and love. Six years later the young man who had been verbally assaulted about his doubts was a Buddhist. The young man who was a Lutheran had grown in his faith to the point where he definitely believed the Bible is God's Word and was working as a full time youth minister.

So what do these have to say about youth ministry? Sometimes there are days when you want to wring the necks of some of your youth. They can be great one

God sent the very best to say, "I love you!" to everyone.

Free ideas for youth ministry!

E-Newsletter!

moment, but then turn around and do something very disappointing the next moment. The urge to kill needs to be suppressed. It helps to remember that "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" even towards you. (Psalm 103:8) Take a moment to think about the times when the Lord probably felt like wringing *your* neck! But he didn't, and he won't!

The second story reminds us that God's grace not only needs to be spoken, but also expressed in our relationships with each other. We can't have a Bible study on forgiveness and then turn around and be judgmental and unforgiving. Our actions speak louder than our words as the expression goes.

Remember how our Lord expressed his love for us? The Hallmark card company has the slogan, "When you care enough to send the very best, send Hallmark." Our God cared enough to send the very best. We remember that at Christmas time when we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. God sent the very best to say, "I love you!" to everyone. Jesus isn't just a card. He is God's only begotten Son. It is the Gospel that is the power of God to save. That Gospel message was accomplished by flesh and blood. Today God uses your flesh and blood to communicate that same powerful Gospel by words and actions and relationships.

May the Lord continue to pour his love into your heart and continue to use you as a vessel of his saving Gospel for the sake of building up the faith of the youth you work with!

— Glenn Zander, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, McMinnville, OR  
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Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

[http://www.nowlcms.org/educational\\_services/YouthSupports.aspx](http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/YouthSupports.aspx)

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### 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/](http://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.

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### 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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