



REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

Follow the McDonald's Model

by Joel A. Nelson, WELS Youth Discipleship Administrator

Get a load of this...

Writers have recently speculated that adolescence now extends until about age 23. Some have argued that the present understanding of adolescence in Western societies is a cultural invention. A perspective of adolescence did not exist in the West until the late 19th century. Until that time, most members of society expected a 16-year old to live as an adult. Other societies still recognize those in the mid-to-late teens as adults, and expect them to function as such. Most developmental theorists would agree that physically, cognitively, and morally the post-pubescent person has all of the same abilities as any adult. The word "puberty" itself comes from the Latin word ~pubertas~ which means "adulthood." From "Raising Our Expectations: Youth, Servant Leaders" by Mark Blanke.

After reading the above, someone might rightly ask, "If teens are so much like adults, why do they act so differently?" To this question Ronald Kotesky, Professor of Psychology at Asbury College, responds:

We expect adolescents to be immature, irresponsible and prone to divorce when they marry. They are. Then we tell them they cannot be treated as adults because they are immature, irresponsible, and divorce prone. When we say that adolescents are not socially or emotionally mature, what we are saying is that we (as part of our culture) have not expected and demanded maturity of them. Even though they are physically mature, cognitively mature, and morally mature, we have not allowed them to be socially mature. We have expected them to behave in some way less than adult.

Issues in Christian Education, Winter 2003.

In a variety of ways, our culture does not encourage youth to grow up. It also does not expect youth to assume leadership roles. And this does not bode well for the future of our society. What is even more tragic is that the encouragement and expectation to be an

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Comments about this

REACH!

and ideas for future issues can be directed to . . .

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adult and assume leadership is even less within the church. And this puts the future of the church – the institutional form of the church, that is – at great risk.

The late Mike Yaconneli, a internationally recognized authority on youth ministry, once observed that McDonalds gives more authority to teens than does the church. McDonalds has 17 and 18-year-old assistant managers who coordinate coworkers’ schedules, manage the till, supervise closing, and generally help facilitate the effective management of the restaurant. While someone could say that the McDonald’s model exploits teen workers because it can’t get older workers to do what needs to be done for the wage paid, the fact remains that teens are given serious responsibility, and the organization continues to flourish.



Here are some questions for all of us to consider: What would happen if our congregations viewed teens as viable contributors to serious ministry? What if teens were given a little training (and it wouldn’t need to be much because we don’t give our adults much training—but that’s another topic!) and then were asked, to serve on committees, sit on boards, attend voters’ meetings, make outreach visits, help with hospital calls, teach Sunday school, coach sports teams, join the adult choir, lead worship, etc, etc, etc? What would happen, is we’d discover a lot of spiritual, caring, talented, passionate, and committed congregation members right under our noses, who would put many adult members to shame. We’d also get a lot more done and be training a whole new generation of leaders in the church to boot!

To learn what some WELS teens are doing for their congregations, their synod, and their Savior, visit [LivingBold <www.livingbold.net>](http://www.livingbold.net) and check out the “Bold Tales” area.

After the Fall A Compelling Free Resource



For Craig DeMartino, it was 100 feet. Straight Down. All because his climbing partner made a terrible mistake. Doctors told Craig he had only one hour to live. But God had other plans. A freak accident that should have ended in tragedy – began an amazing triumph. *After the Fall* takes you to the edge of life to grasp what really matters. It forces you to personally consider, “How far does God have to go to get my attention?” This gripping new resource reaches kids, teens, and adults with the unforgettable message that Jesus Christ is the most important thing in life.

After the Fall (video and 12 section study guide—a \$24.99 value) are available to all WELS churches absolutely free from Group Incorporated. No obligation! No postage! No strings! This is part of Group’s annual “Give Back”

program, a program through which Group gives back to the Christian community 10% of its annual profits. This year, the give back is *After the Fall*.

“I first saw the *After the Fall* video when I attended a meeting at Group’s national headquarters last November,” said WELS CYD Administrator, Joel Nelson, “We were all given a copy which I then took and showed to my 7th grade Sunday school class. The story is very compelling and really emphasizes how Jesus and our faith in him are what really matter in life. Forgiveness, dealing with great adversity, love, trust, and several other themes come out. I would recommend this video for use in any WELS church with a variety of age groups. It demonstrates that God does work miracles, and that he cares about each of us so very much.”

To get your free copy of the video and Leader’s Guide call 1-800-747-6060 or go to www.grouppublishing.com/afterthefall. One copy per congregation while supplies last.

Your Search Is Over!

by Joel Hochmuth



Do you struggle to find video resources for your teen Bible classes and youth groups that are compelling, engaging, and scripturally sound? Would you like to find a resource that could be used in teen or teens with their parents settings? With *Walk in My World*, your search is over.

Walk In My World is a new four-part series produced by the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD). It presents solid Biblical principals in a state-of-the-art video production. Using a video news magazine style, each episode features the real-life stories of a variety of WELS teens and their families as they confront issues from a spiritual point of view.

The true value of *Walk In My World* is that it helps break the ice on topics that you know young people are talking about and dealing with on a daily basis, but may be afraid or embarrassed to discuss with you. Your teens will listen in as other WELS teens talk openly and honestly about a gay sibling, divorced parents, their own sexual sins, coping with serious illness, and witnessing for Christ in their everyday lives.

Each episode runs between 10 and 15 minutes and “sets the table” for discussion

that’s sure to follow. A comprehensive Bible study/discussion guide, with editions for both students and teachers, accompanies each video episode. The study guides are designed to focus the discussion and lead teens (and parents) into a deeper understanding of God’s Word and how Christians are called to walk that Word in their world.

Consider using *Walk In My World* for your regular teen Bible classes or for Bible camps, youth rallies, teen retreats, and Lutheran high school classes. It’s also an excellent resource for bringing parents and teens together – either at home or at a church-sponsored seminar. You might even consider how *Walk In My World* could be used as an outreach effort into the community.

Walk In My World is in final layout and printing now and will be available April 1, 2004, from shopwels.net and the CYD office.

Order #: 38-3089.

Cost: \$49.95 for video, cd, and binder with leader’s guides and participant copy masters.

Watch for a promotional mailer coming soon!



Meet the *Walk In My World* Producer

Walk In My World was the brainchild of Joel Hochmuth, WELS member from Atlanta, GA. Joel is a former CNN correspondent, news writer, and copy editor (15 years) and served as the producer/director and on-camera host for *Walk In My World*. “To have this kind of experience, talent, and insight guiding the content and video production of *Walk In My World* has given us an amazing resource,” said Joel Nelson, WELS Youth Discipleship Administrator.

Joel currently works as a freelance television producer and also teaches *Writing for Public Communication* and *News Reporting and Writing* at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta. Joel, his wife, Heidi, and their 8 year old son, Adam, live in Acworth, GA and are members of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Marietta, GA.

Walk In My World was produced through a generous grant from the WELS Publication Coordinating Commission. Last January, CYD was awarded another grant to produce *Walk In My World 2*. Joel Hochmuth will be the producer/director again.

To talk to Joel about his work on *Walk In My World*, his life at CNN, or his teen Bible class, email him:

jhochmuth@peoplepc.com

God's Power, Presence, and Purpose

The 2003 International Youth Rally keynote presentations (on video) and their companion Bible studies are now available for order. Presented by Rev. John Boggs of Mobile, AL, these entertaining, engaging, and enlightening talks cover three topics: *God's Power Is Matchless*, *God's Presence Is Miraculous*, *God's Purpose Is Made Known*. Reproducible presentation outlines, Bible studies, and a Leader's Guide are included. Your teens need not to have attended the rally to enjoy this resource.

Order from <cyd@sab.wels.net> or <www.shopwels.net>. Item # 38-3088. \$15.95 plus shipping.

Grounding Asset Building in Lutheran Faith

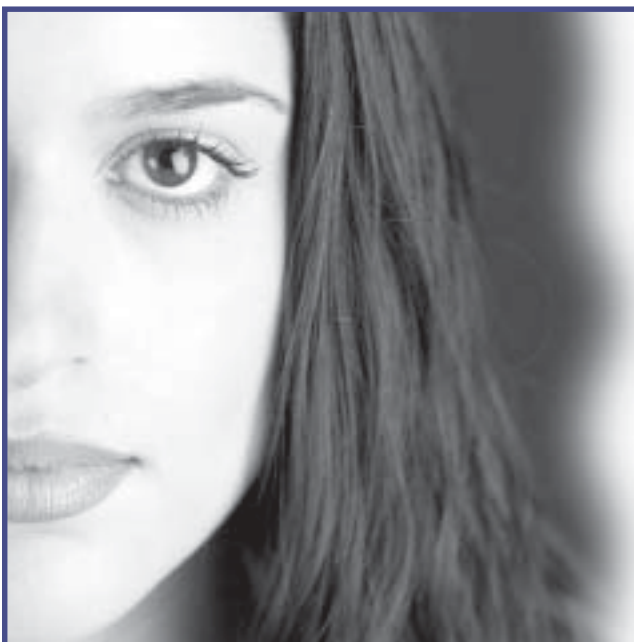
Search Institute has taken its youth asset building framework and given it a decidedly Lutheran emphasis. The role of God's Word and the sacraments is included. Bible passages relating to each of the 40 developmental assets have been identified. If you'd like an electronic copy (pdf) email CYD Administrator Nelson <joelnels@sab.wels.net>.

Grading Grown-Ups: How Do American Kids and Adults Relate?

Grading Grown-Ups 2002: How Do American Kids and Adults Relate is a study examining how adults' beliefs compare with their actions towards kids in America. The study reveals that most American adults and young people agree to a surprising degree on what kids need from them but most adults don't act on their own beliefs. *Grading Grown-Ups 2002* also examines what adults are currently doing to meet young people's needs and it offers practical strategies for strengthening relationships across generations. You can obtain this study and related resources and information at <www.search-institute.org>.

Help Is Only A Click Away

The WELS Youth Discipleship website lists over 34 different teen ministry resources and 20 different Bible studies to help you and your youth ministry become more effective at sharing God's Word. Go to <www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship>. Click on the collection, "Consultation and Resources" and then "Teen Ministry Resources" or "Teen Bible Studies." You'll find some great helps!



Calling All Caring and Creative Teens!

LivingBold, the electronic magazine for WELS teens, needs articles for its "Bold Tales" and "Teen Gallery" areas. "Bold Tales" shares the stories of WELS teens engaged in ministry to others. The "Teen Gallery" shares original art, poems, articles, etc. from teens themselves.

Go to the *LivingBold* site
to check out examples!



Youth Rallies Are In Our Blood!

by Geroge and LaVon Schultz, St. Mark's Lutheran Church - Normal, IL

Have you ever attended a Youth Rally? Do you know what goes on at the WELS International Youth Rally? Here are a few thoughts that can help you to see what goes on.

We began attending WELS Youth Rallies in 1974. But that was not the beginning of our interest in youth. Both of us, living in different states, had the same experiences in our teen years. Both of us were active in the local youth programs of the church. From there we became youth counselors at an early age, LaVon at the age of 18 (now age 69) and George in his late 20's (now age 76). After our marriage we continued in youth work. Both of us saw the need for youth to be active in the church and to grow in God's Word. Once we had our own children, we wanted our children to experience the joys of attending a youth rally.

In 1974, while attending an area youth gathering in Savanna, IL with our oldest son, Pastor Allan Zahn asked us to help assist with the group traveling to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada for the first International Youth Rally. Since the youth were housed in homes, counseling was easy. The adults assisted where needed. That first rally was limited to only 150 people. The Bible Study groups were certainly much smaller as were the recreational opportunities. The food lines were shorter, and the great food was prepared by the congregation's ladies. One afternoon was spent at a farmer's field. A huge bonfire was built and various sports games played. Suddenly the clouds came in and rain was seen coming. Everyone could see God's hand push the clouds and the rain around the field so the activities were not dampened.

Since then (even after our own children were grown) LaVon has attended every International Youth Rally, and George all but two. One may ask, why? It's just an instilled desire. What a great opportunity to help direct and guide the future leaders of the church. Leading the youth in Bible studies gave us the opportunity to lead the youth into God's Word, the basis of our entire life. The dorm floor devotions brought the youth together for fellowship but mainly helped them prepare for life here and in eternity.

Why would teens want to go to a rally? A youth once expressed the feeling of joy in meeting people from all over the country, especially when she came from a small mission church. A rally develops lasting friendships that may even end in finding a lifetime mate (two of our own children married people they met at rallies). Rallies teach you that

you can be "cool" to believe in God, go to church, etc. One can listen to other people your age talk about the pressures - and learn that you're not alone! When one hears this, one realizes the need for this ministry.

Youth Rallies are not all work. There is lots of time for fun. The activities are great and there is plenty of free time for meeting other teens. The time goes by so fast, one wishes it would last another few days. Memories are great and we can't wait for the next one.

Each rally has its own challenges. As the attendance grows the programs and activities have to change. No longer can bowling alleys be rented for an afternoon. No longer can homes be used for housing. Now what a great opportunity to meet other youth when there are over 2000 in attendance and you can then hear each other's comments during break-out sessions.

Have we seen a change in the teens over the years? Their needs may change due to world problems and experiences; but teens are teens. Some have more energy than others but all teens want guidance and encouragement. Channel the energy of the youth, not with rules and demands, and time will be fruitful. There are always those youth who spoil it for other youth. Just as a pendulum on a clock, so the actions of the youth change.

What can we say to the individual leaders of the youth? Get the parents involved as much as possible in youth activities. Encourage all the youth, no matter what age, to be active in the church. Attend a youth rally yourself so you can give first hand encouragement. Plan programs that balance worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service. By all means, encourage your youth to attend the rallies.

To the youth, we would like to say, "Mark your calendar NOW so you reserve the date both for the district rally and then the International Rally. Attend one and you will want to attend another. It gets in your blood. Thirty years later, it's still in ours.

You can learn more about the 2004 summer District rallies and the 2005 International Youth Rally by visiting the "Links Lot" on the LivingBold website <www.livingbold.net>.



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Commission on Youth Discipleship

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REACH!



Date/Location/Cost: Fri.-Sun. September 17-19, 2004.
Naperville, IL (25 miles west of Chicago). \$135/person covers
everything-lodging, meals, materials...everything!

Conference Mission: The WELS National Youth Ministry
Conference exists to give WELS called and lay ministers a
larger scale opportunity to learn from God's Word, from
experts in youth and parenting ministry, and from each other, so
that their ministry competence and commitment to Christ
grows.

Keynote Presentations:

- ◆ "Building from the Ground Up: The Importance of Parents
and Home"

- ◆ "Building an Outreaching Ministry: The Importance of
Sharing Jesus with Everyone"
- ◆ "Building a Ministry of Strong Partnerships:
The Importance of Working Together"

Sectionals on These Ministry Areas: Parenting, Catechism
and Confirmation, Special Needs, Sunday School, VBS, Early
Childhood, Teens, Outreach, Christian Camps, Para-Synodical
Youth Ministries PLUS: Networking Nooks, Models Sharing,
Open Space Discussions, Organization Displays, and the NPH
Bookstore.

Special Bonus!!! A pre-conference workshop on the new
"Faith Stepping Stones" curriculum will be conducted the day
of September 17 by the authors and Wisconsin Lutheran Child
and Family Service staff. Cost: \$89.00.

Watch for more information coming soon!

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."
~ Psalm 127:1*

Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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