



REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

Beyond Fun & Games

Developing a Youth Ministry with Higher Values

by Pastor Arnold Lemke, Faith Lutheran Church - Excelsior, MN

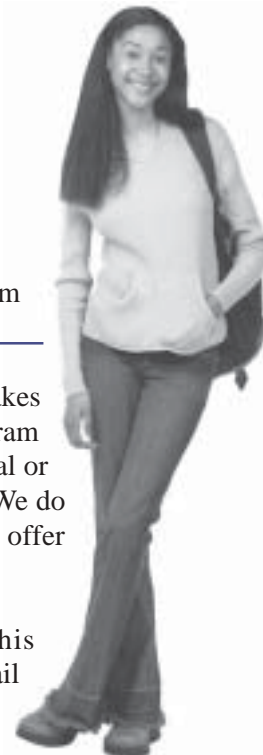
“We had a good group of kids coming back from the [youth] rally thrilled with their experience and we were sure it would carry into the fall and the Sunday teen meetings. But when teachers were chosen and the meetings announced, hardly anyone showed up!”

How many teen programs and leaders have not had that kind of disappointing experience? So, where does one go in order to take a step beyond the “fun and games” to a continuing program that incorporates such important values as Bible study, service projects, worship involvement, and fellowship development? Experience has shown there to be certain basic principles of youth organization that cannot be ignored for a successful program:

- ◆ Planning substantial time and effort for recruitment and promotion (it doesn't do just to announce a teen activity)
- ◆ Doing quality short and long range planning
- ◆ Putting a priority on visible service projects
- ◆ Giving teens “their own place” in the church and a line in the budget
- ◆ Beginning with a separate 7-8 grade “junior teen” program that parallels senior teen studies and activities
- ◆ Perhaps most importantly (and often forgotten) - incorporating parents into the planning, evaluation, and activities of the program

Other principles too could be mentioned. But it's a reminder that it takes some thought and commitment to set up a truly working teen program that will carry through the whole year. [A larger event like a national or district youth rally] can have a role but is not a substitute for this. We do owe it to our teens to make the right organizational effort - not just offer “fun and games” - don't we?

To speak further with Pastor Lemke about this article and his congregation's approach to youth ministry call 952-474-4966 or email <alemke@wavefront.com>.



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AND MUCH MORE!

Comments about this **REACH!** and ideas for future issues can be directed to . . .

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WORSHIP FOR TEENS: “STAYING ALIVE” OR NOT

by Pastor Wayne Laitinen, St. John's Lutheran Church - New Ulm, MN



Want to Talk About It with Your Teens and/or Teen Parents?

What do you think about the worship today's teens should experience?

What do WELS teens really want their congregations to offer them in worship?

Can all the generations be fed spiritually by the same style of worship?

If you could change anything about the worship you experience in your congregation, what would it be?

How does the Bible define worship?

How would you rate the worship you personally give to God?

[Some time ago] in a dinner conversation, my guest told me that at a WELS youth retreat, a 40-something WELS pastor was scheduled to give a presentation on (his genre of) contemporary worship. He began his presentation with the question, “When it comes to worship, you probably don’t care too much for the liturgy, do you?” The teens responded with that deer-in-the-headlights look. After a moment, some of them said softly, “No, we like the liturgy in our church.” Then the presenter followed up with, “And those hymns. You probably would rather have something more upbeat than the hymns you usually sing, right?” Silence again. Then, a few began to respectfully differ, “No, we like the hymns, too.” My guest commented, “His presentation was over before it began.” Then my guest made the observation that the teens are not the ones who are clamoring for “contemporary” music in worship, but middle-agers who think they know what teens ought to like and not like [are doing the clamoring].

In confirmation class we opened the lessons on the articles with Luther’s [hymn] “We All Believe in One True God.” After a couple weeks of singing it, my confirmation kids asked to sing hymn 271 during the “kid’s choice” portion of music class. When the teacher looked it up, he said, “No, that’s too hard for us.” Translation: (take your pick) “I don’t know it” or “I don’t like it, so neither should you.”

One more anecdote: At [a district teen retreat last summer], a middle-aged Christian rock band tried to get the youth into the music they were playing by urging them to make movements, a la

John Travolta in “Staying Alive.” Reluctantly, the teens complied. But as they pointed their hands in opposite directions, some smiled nervously at their hapless compatriots. Others just rolled their eyes.

It seems that our Lutheran Xers are much more patient than we Boomers were when the establishment told us what we ought to like. Come to think of it, the liturgy and the hymns were some of the things I rejoiced that I had in common with my parents and grandparents. The thought of doing some stranger’s thing because I wasn’t supposed to like my parent’s church never entered my mind.

There really needs to be critical thinking about why we promote what we promote in the name of worship. It seems that if it’s easy, fun and parents see the kids enjoying it (evangelism hook), the only Scripture that is required is, “all things are permissible.” In fact, the teens I work with are open to meaty doctrinal discussions, depth in hymnody, exploring biblical imagery and church symbolism. In the world of fractured families, worship is the quintessential area of unity between generations. It seems almost diabolical to draw a Mason/Dixon Line between generations on this sacred ground. Unfortunately, parents who don’t know why they do what they do in church, trust leaders who make extreme choices in the name of outreach or retention. As ambassadors of Christ, we bear a tremendous responsibility when we give the teens in the church impressions of what worship ought to be...and, more importantly, why.

National Youth Ministry Conference Coming

Beginning in the fall of 2004, the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) will sponsor a National Youth Ministry Conference for WELS members who are engaged in ministry to youth from birth through the final year of high school. The conference will feature speakers, workshops, presentations, panel discussions, youth ministry resources, and plenty of opportunity to network with others involved in ministry to youth and families.

The National Youth Ministry Conference will be held every other year, in the even numbered years, and will rotate its location around the country in a Midwest, West, Midwest, East kind of rotation. The exact date and location for the 2004 conference has not been determined. Watch for more details coming soon.

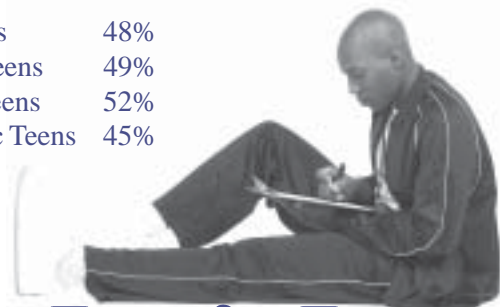
The National Youth Ministry Conference will replace the annual National Sunday School Conference and the annual National Youth Counselors' Workshop. Sunday school and youth ministry workshops will still be sponsored by individual districts. Contact your district CYD Coordinator for any details. Check the CYD website or contact <cyd@sab.wels.net> for a Coordinator directory.

Church Attendance

In October 2002, the Gallup Organization reported its results for a telephone survey of 2,957 teens ages 13-17. The survey question: *Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last 7 days, or not?*

Percent Saying "Yes."

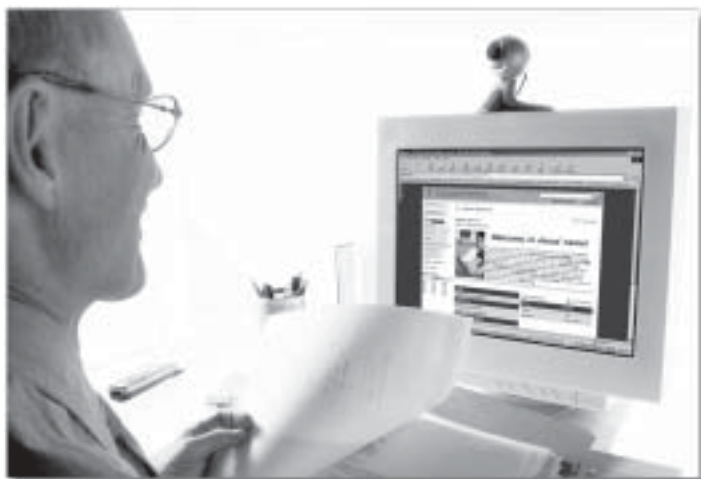
All Teens	48%
White Teens	49%
Black Teens	52%
Hispanic Teens	45%



Service Trips for Teens

Want to have your group experience the personal and spiritual growth that comes from serving others on a special national or international mission/service trip? Contact Pastor Richard Warnecke, Administrator of *Faith in Action*, at WELS Kingdom Workers (WKW). Call 414-771-6848 or email <fia@wkw.wels.net>. You can also check out the *Faith in Action* website <<http://www.wels.net/wkw/action.html>>.

Youth Discipleship Website Has a New Look!



Youth Discipleship. For a complete listing of all the resources CYD has to offer, click on Consultation and Resources. To learn about various training opportunities, click on National, District, and Local Training. For fun activities for children and teens, click on Just for Youth. To link to a host of helpful websites, click on Vital Links.

After you look around on the website, email us your reactions: what was good, bad, ugly, etc. Your feedback will help us to make the site an even better resource for you.



Coming this fall...the new & improved WELS website for teens

◆ Timely, Spiritual Articles on Real Life

Focus on life in today's world through the loving lens of God's Word

◆ Tales of the Living Bold!

Hear about WELS teens and teen groups that are making a difference, witnessing to others, serving in love, and modeling how to live boldly for the Lord.

◆ Live Chat

Talk in real time to other teens, authors, artists, and church leaders.

◆ Give & Take

Post messages and respond to what others have posted.

◆ Links Lot

View links to other interesting and informative WELS and non-WELS sites.

◆ Teen Gallery

See WELS teen produced articles, poetry, art, photography, streaming video, and cartoons. (Contact <cyd@sab.wels.net> for submission criterion)

◆ The Attic

Check out previous LivingBold content

◆ Bold thought of the week

◆ Bi-weekly polls

◆ "Uplink" daily email devotions

www.livingbold.net

Helping teens grow in their relationship with Jesus and each other!

Resource Recommendation

Christianity, Cults & Religions

1999, Rose Publishing-Torrance, CA

<www.rose-publishing.com>

\$3.95/copy – cheaper in bulk.

- ◆ Compares the beliefs of 17 cults and world religions with those of biblical Christianity.
- ◆ Explains each group's beliefs on God, Jesus, Heaven, life after death, salvation and more.
- ◆ Contains key facts on the founder, date, and location of headquarters.
- ◆ Features dramatic recent changes in several groups including Worldwide Church of God.
- ◆ Uses the most up-to-date research.
- ◆ Pamphlet fits in your Bible (8-1/2 x 5-1/2"). The twelve pages unfold to 33 inches (85 cm).
- ◆ Available 2 ways: a wall chart for your office or classroom, and a pamphlet for the leaders and students.

"[Our teen group] visited different churches and then discussed the religion after we observed their service or talked with their church leaders. I used the brochure from Rose Publishing called Christianity, Cults & Religions. It is a nice summary of 17 world religions and how they compare with Christianity. It was a nice place to start our discussions."

Erik Nelson, Minister of Youth and Family
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, North Mankato, MN

An Article Can Make A Difference: A Letter to *LivingBold*

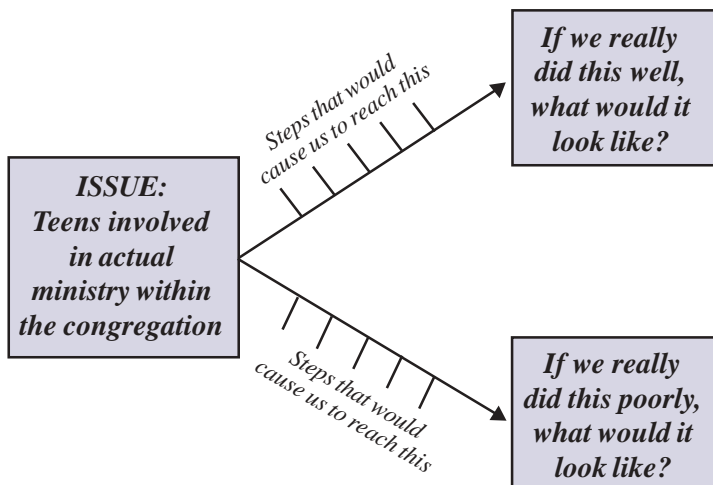
I am the teen choir director and work with students in 7-12 grade. I found the article, "Time Can Be On Your Side" very relevant and helpful for some of the students I work with. With today's lifestyle stress, time and priorities play a major part in many students' lives. This [LivingBold] article helped a student realize her situation and hopefully make some adjustments in her life. I think this type of article is very helpful to students and gives them a reminder of what is really important.

Thanks,
Michelle

A Simple Format for Evaluation and Improvement of Your Youth Ministry

The simple model at right can be used for any issue. The issue under consideration is placed in the left box. Two directions or outcomes (one positive, one negative) are identified when the questions in the right boxes are answered. The ribs on the arrow lines, represent the things that would contribute to achieving the positive or negative outcome.

Begin by selecting an issue and placing it in the left box. Next, answer the two outcome questions in the right boxes, as they relate to the issue. After you come up with an answer that describes what things would look like under each outcome scenario, go back and fill in the ribs with the things that contribute to the positive and negative outcomes. Once the contributors for each outcome have been identified, discuss what specific things you would do to minimize the bad, maximize the good, and reach the positive outcome.



Sex, Lies and Teen Guilt

A December 2002, the Gallup Organization reported its results for a telephone survey of 454 teens ages 13-17. The survey question: I am going to read you a list of circumstances. For each one I read, please tell me if you would feel guilty or not, even if nobody else ever knew about it. Would you feel guilty or not guilty about...

Percent Saying "Yes, I would feel guilty."

Circumstances Asked About	Total	Boys	Girls
Neglecting your parents when they are old	92%	91%	94%
Stealing something	88%	88%	88%
Not paying a debt	83%	81%	85%
Lying to a friend	81%	78%	86%
Being disloyal to your group	80%	78%	81%
Cheating on a test in school	77%	73%	80%
Surfing for pornography on the internet	77%	69%	86%
Swearing or cursing at a teacher	75%	75%	75%
Having sexual intercourse before you are married	59%	53%	66%



WELS Youth Rallies Update

WELS International Youth Rally "Nothing Higher"

- ◆ YMCA of the Rockies
- Estes Park, CO (July 9-12.)
- ◆ 2500 in attendance – a new record!
- ◆ Download pictures, music, and more from the *LivingBold* and CYD websites
- ◆ Obtain the official rally CD from <cyd@sab.wels.net>. Cost: \$5.00 plus s&h.

West Coast WELS Youth Rally "Following in His Footsteps"

- ◆ University of California
- San Diego, CA (June 27-29)
- ◆ 250 in attendance!
- ◆ Check out <www.welsyouthrally2.net> for more details and reports.

East Coast WELS Youth Rally "My Witnesses - From Sea to Shining Sea"

- ◆ Christopher Newport University-
Newport News, VA (July 21-24)
- ◆ 400 in attendance!
- ◆ Check out rally pictures and much more at <www.shepherdofthebay.com>.



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Three WELS Teens to Be Appointed

The CYD has, as an on-going ministry, the organization and administration of the WELS International Youth Rally (IYR). The IYR has historically utilized a planning committee to work with the Rally Coordinator. Never in its history, has the IYR appointed WELS teens to serve on this committee. In an effort to obtain input and feedback from the age group served by the IYR, to communicate to WELS teens synodically that their contribution is valued, and as a way to demonstrate to WELS congregations the need to engage teens in ministry planning at all levels, the CYD will appoint three WELS teens to the International Youth Rally Planning Committee.

Information on this process, the criterion, and the official *Teen Member Nomination Form* can be obtained from CYD. Email <cyd@sab.wels.net> or call 414-256-3274.

Showcase Your God-given Talent

LivingBold (www.livingbold.net), the WELS web site for teens invites WELS teens from around the country to submit original stories, poems, art, photography, cartoons, spiritual articles, and streaming video for inclusion on a newly redesigned LB web site. The submissions must be made electronically to cyd@sab.wels.net and include the author's/artist's name, address, phone number, email address, high school name, year of the student in school, and name of WELS congregation attending. All submissions included on the site will receive a cash honorarium (amount yet to be determined) and the "ooos" and "aaahs" of teens from around the world. Take advantage of this opportunity to showcase the God-given talents you have and to help make *LivingBold* a more exciting site for teens to visit.



Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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