



# REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

## Creating Youth-FULL Churches

### Part 2

by Dr. Joel A. Nelson, Administrator – WELS Youth Discipleship

In the last issue of *REACH!* I shared two of the four foundational statements with explanations from the “Conceptual Framework on Youth-full Churches.” This framework was developed by WELS Youth Discipleship as an outgrowth of the national study, *Why Young People Leave WELS* (WYPLW). The first two foundational statements were...

**Youth-full churches see the vital role they play in the training of youth...Through the example of and partnership with parents, through Christian education opportunities, and through Christ-centered activities.**

**Youth-full churches keep young people engaged in worship...By recognizing their needs and interests, educating them in matters of worship, seeking to include them in worship opportunities, and by doing worship well.**

What follows are the final two foundational statements.

#### **Youth-FULL churches demonstrate Christ-like attitudes**

- Concerning WELS and non-WELS Christians (*WYPLW Rec. #7*)
- Concerning service opportunities for men and women (*WYPLW Rec. #7*)
- Concerning matters of adiaphora

Paul clearly warns in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, “The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine...They will turn their ears away from the truth...” You need not look too far to realize that we are living in these times. Because of it, we must be on guard to make sure we are not, “carried away by all kinds of strange teachings” Hebrews 13:9. While we are commanded to stand firm on the absolute truth of God’s Word as recorded on the verbally inspired pages of the Bible, we are also encouraged to, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” 1Peter 3:15.

God wants us to defend his truth and share it with others in loving ways. As they endeavor to present sound doctrine and clear teaching, youth-full churches model and teach this “truth in

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## REACH!

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

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## 2009 Rally Theme, Location, and Date Set

“Follow the Path, Lead the Way” has been selected as the 2009 WELS International Youth Rally theme. The theme is based on 1 Timothy 4:12, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” The location will be Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa ([www.iastate.edu](http://www.iastate.edu)) and the dates are Wednesday-Saturday, July 8-11.

The theme, Bible passage, and location were largely the idea of the three teens who are members of the International Youth Rally Planning Committee: Tatum Gormley-Nettles (Henderson, NV), Nicole Livigne (Jupiter, FL), and CJ Fischer (Sartell, MN). All three wanted to focus rally participants and the wider WELS on the fact that teens today are important members of the Body of Christ with much to offer the church. Teens must faithfully follow the path of Jesus and then boldly lead the way for others via their example, witness, and service. Tatum, Nicole, and CJ also felt that having a rally on a college campus would be a good experience for those who would be wondering what life in college might be like. You can read more about why this site was selected at the rally Web site: [www.welsyouthrally.net](http://www.welsyouthrally.net).

Registration will again be done completely online with the per person registration fee remaining \$295.00.



L-R: Nicole Livigne, CJ Fischer, Tatum Gormley-Nettles

love” philosophy so that faith and love grow. Their education on and explanation of more sensitive issues is done in such a way that God is glorified and the body of Christ is built up. By the power of the Holy Spirit, youth-full churches prepare and equip their members, from the earliest ages on, to speak and act like Jesus.

### **Youth-FULL churches target youth/young adults for involvement in the church**

- **By providing a variety of service opportunities** (*WYPLW Rec. #8, 9*)
- **By staying in touch with and encouraging those away at college, military, etc.** (*WYPLW Rec. #10*)
- **By helping youth to transition into active young adults** (*WYPLW Rec. #11*)

The Bible has a lot to say on the subject of service. Jesus washing the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-17) is one great example. In that lesson, Jesus said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” In Matthew 20:26, Jesus taught his disciples: “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...” Ephesians 4:12 expresses that God’s people are to be prepared for “works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Romans 12:11 reminds the Christian to never lack zeal, but to “keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Ephesians 6:7 adds, “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.” Serving the Lord and others is an act of worship flowing from a thankful heart.

Youth-full churches recognize how important the service mindset is. They know that through the Means of Grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, children and teens are motivated to worship God and love others through acts of service. Youth-full churches create opportunities for children and teens to serve inside and outside of the congregation, using their God-given gifts in meaningful ways. Youth-full churches know that the children and teens in their midst are valuable parts of the Body of Christ and will feel more positively about their future in the church if they can become an active part of it today.



CYD has developed Bible studies/discussion guides around all of the “Creating Youth-full Churches” foundational statements to use with youth and adults. Free downloads in Word and pdf formats can be found at [www.wels.net/jump/youthstudy](http://www.wels.net/jump/youthstudy).

# 2009 Rally Team Teens Selected

The selection process for the 2009 WELS International Youth Rally Committee teen members was completed last fall. 11 teens were successfully nominated from the states of Florida, Minnesota, Colorado, Wisconsin, Maryland, and Nevada with the following three teens being selected:

*CJ Fischer*

Sartell, MN

**St. Croix Lutheran High School**

Class of 2010 CJ was nominated by his church's Staff Minister, Josh Roth. Of CJ, Josh writes, "I know that CJ loves his Lord and Savior, and it shows in his words and actions...[he] shows incredible leadership skills for someone so young... he has a great desire to serve in this capacity..."



*Tatum Gormley-Nettles*

Henderson, NV

**Coronado High School**

Class of 2009 Tatum was nominated by Pastor Matt Pfeifer. He describes Tatum by saying, "Dedication is one of the first words I think of when I think of Tatum. First is her dedication to her Savior...She knows from experience what the world and even her friends think of Christianity. She knows what a difference Jesus Christ makes in a person's life."



*Nicole Livigne*

Jupiter, FL

**Jupiter High School**

Class of 2009 Nicole was nominated by Pastor Don Thompson (Shepherd of the Palms, Jupiter, FL) and Pastor Jon Enter (Hope, West Palm Beach, FL). Pastor Thompson writes, "[Nicole's] perspectives about what is going on with youth today, her strong Christian faith, her bubbly - but humble - personality, her intelligence and her ready smile, her smarts and her ability to speak well, her servant heart and her willingness to speak freely of Jesus [make] her a can't miss for the [Committee]."



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Julie Schoenrock from New London, WI (Fox Valley Lutheran High School - Class of 2009) was selected as the alternate. The other nominees were Rebekah Leerson (Buffalo, MN), Kodi Long (West Bend, WI), Alyssa Mittlestadt (Prairie Farm, WI), Stephen Pankow (Cape Coral, FL), Daron Quimby (Melbourne, FL), Alyssa Trelstad (Upper Marleboro, MD), and Jennifer Uhlhorn (Colorado Springs, CO).

WELS Youth Discipleship thanks all those who nominated teens, and the 11 teens who were willing to be nominated. WELS is truly blessed with some incredible young people!

## The Golden Compass

THE GOLDEN COMPASS  
12.7.07



The movie *The Golden Compass* was released earlier this winter and has stirred some controversy because of its purported anti-Christian message. Your teens may enjoy seeing the movie and then working through the Bible study/discussion guide from Concordia Publishing House (CPH). It is available for download at [www.cph.org/compass](http://www.cph.org/compass).

Of the discussion guide, Pastor Ray Schumacher of WELS Northwestern Publishing House said, "CPH has prepared what appears to be a pretty good discussion guide for helping Christians evaluate the movie. [It could prove] helpful to pastors, youth leaders, or interested parents." Pastor Peter Panitzke of St. Paul's Muskego, WI said, "I just read the [CPH] Bible study...I think this would be a great "special study" for our teens, our junior high kids, and our parents."



# Have the Courage to Shake Things Up

by Joy and Michael Lenz — St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Oconomowoc, WI

You've heard all the cliché's... "Shake things up a little", "Try new things," "Don't settle for the status quo"... After being a youth group leader for about five years, I'm learning I have to constantly try new things and be bold. However, I've also learned that the activities I chose can reflect my personal tastes and my youth group's personal tastes.

God says 11 times in the Bible, "Be strong and courageous." I have to tell myself that frequently when planning events and working with teenagers. Obviously there will be times of disappointment . . . but I want to persevere and God commands us to do just that. Here are just a few things I've tried:

## 1. Get personal in your church

Greet teens by name and ask them how they are doing. Find out what activities they enjoy and ask specifically about them. Try to talk to them without your "agenda of youth group events" always front and center. The teens may be less likely to run when they see you coming.

## 2. Get personal outside of church

While sipping a shake, an iced mocha (my favorite), or soda. In an effort to get to know some of my teens better I meet with them at local restaurants. It is less intimidating than church and fun for everyone. I do this in very small groups to keep it personal. This can be a daunting task, but focus on the teens in spiritual need (for me it is public school teens vs. those attending Lutheran high schools, for example).

## 3. Same old event-new twist.

For example, for about four years our teens have been helping families with special needs children get ready for Christmas. This year, we added visiting elderly people and those recuperating from major surgery, babysitting for new

members with young children, and even shoveling. We were able to match the talents of teens to people's needs and even got the guys excited and participating!

## 4. Seek teen and parent involvement

We do a progressive dinner night in the homes of teens . . . complete with one course of a meal, a game and a devotion. We usually go to three different houses on one night. This is a great way to mix teens up and not overwhelm the hosts.

## 5. Get cooking

Organize a Gourmet Girls Night. I enjoy cooking and entertaining and have found this a great activity for mixing girls of different grades and schools. We do a devotion and play a game too. Guys have Game Night - go to a game or go bowling. Your hobbies can creatively turn into a teen event!

## 6. Communicate with multimedia

I do weekly e-mails to parents and teens, send occasional postcards or letters, hand out flyers personally, and make phone calls. Delegate as much of this as you can to the teens themselves or parents.

## 7. Bring in guest speakers

Occasional visits by the Pastor are an added bonus!!!

## 8. Listen to the teens

Incorporate their wishes in your plans.

## 9. Try new things

Even if you need to cancel it . . . don't give up. Count the teens that are there, not the teens that aren't!

## 10. PRAY

Ask for God's guidance in every "shake" you make!

## Bella: A Must-See!

by Diane L. Fleischmann, Information Services Coordinator — Christian Life Resources (WELS), Milwaukee, WI  
[www.christianliferesources.com](http://www.christianliferesources.com)

Following two strong opening weekends, the pro-life movie *Bella* has opened in more markets across the nation. Bioethics Defense Fund President Nikolas Nikas characterized *Bella* as "a powerful and profoundly moving film that every high school and college student should see." Tony Bennett has called the film a "work of art." Executive Producer Steve McEveety, producer of *The Passion of the Christ*, was instrumental in bringing *Bella* to the Toronto Film Festival, where it won Best Film. To see a preview of *Bella* and the inspiring story of the lead actor, go to <http://www.bellathemovie.com/site/#/film/videos/>.

# "REACH!" Going Electronic

by Jeremy Bakken, Administrative Assistant — WELS Youth Discipleship

At its October 2007 meeting, the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship voted to discontinue print production and surface mailing of *REACH!*. The increasing costs of conducting all CYD ministry and the reality of decreasing Synod budgetary dollars for CYD required some cutting back. As a result, CYD will no longer mail printed copies of *REACH!* to its subscribers. This change will take effect after the Summer 2008 print edition of the newsletter is mailed out.

Production and mailing of CYD's three newsletters (*Sowers & Seeds*, *Partners*, and *REACH!*) to over 50,000 subscribers annually costs CYD over \$32,000. Because no subscription fees are charged, the money was taken directly out of CYD's yearly operating budget. As CYD's allocation from the synod budget has decreased, adjustments to CYD ministry must be made. One such adjustment is taking the newsletters online.

The Commission feels this approach is better stewardship and makes dollars currently used for the newsletters available to fund other needed ministries. It also keeps pace with how people today are getting more and more of their information on demand via the World Wide Web.

## From now on, you can get *REACH!* in one of two ways:

- 1) On the CYD Web site. Go to [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship) and click on "Newsletter Archive" on the right-hand side. Browse through the appropriate folders to see the most recent issue. Read it online or print it out for yourself and others.
- 2) Go to [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship) and click on "Newsletter E-mail Service" on the right-hand side. Follow the instructions for subscribing to receive e-mail notification each time a new issue is released.

New issues will be available online according to the following schedule:

Fall – late August	Spring – late February
Winter – late November	Summer – late May

We thank you for your understanding as we make the switch to solely online distribution. We hope you continue to find *REACH!* timely, relevant and helpful in your ministry. Questions and comments can be directed to [cyd@sab.wels.net](mailto:cyd@sab.wels.net).

## LivingBold Continues to Expand!

Check out what's happening on LivingBold – WELS Web site for teens:

- **Weekly podcast devotions added.** They can be played online or downloaded to an mp3 player. ([www.livingbold.net/uplink](http://www.livingbold.net/uplink))
- **Discussion board activity increasing.** Recently, discussions on the look of the Web site and the challenges teens face have been the hottest topics. ([www.livingbold.net/discuss](http://www.livingbold.net/discuss))
- **WELS teen Web sites featured weekly.** Recent features have included: God's Warriors (St. Paul's, Muskego WI), Our Savior's Teens (Our Savior, Grafton WI), TOPS (Teens of Peace, Hartford WI), and The Connection (Bloomington Lutheran, Bloomington MN). LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONGREGATION'S TEEN GROUP WEB SITE. E-mail [cyd@sab.wels.net](mailto:cyd@sab.wels.net). ([www.livingbold.net/welsspace](http://www.livingbold.net/welsspace))
- **New articles and poems added.** Recent additions include *Fearing the Future* by Cate Anne, *The Skill to Wrench a Dish Wiper* by Jie, and *God is Enough* by Josh. ENCOURAGE YOUR TEENS TO SUBMIT ART, ARTICLES, VIDEOS, AND MORE. E-mail [cyd@sab.wels.net](mailto:cyd@sab.wels.net). ([www.livingbold.net/welsspace/gallery](http://www.livingbold.net/welsspace/gallery))
- **Chat participation on the rise.** To see a list of upcoming chats, visit [www.livingbold.net/chat](http://www.livingbold.net/chat).

## Search Institute's Top Ten Religious Interests of Teens

- Learn how to make a friend and be a friend
- Learn about right and wrong
- Learn more about who God is
- Learn how to know and love Jesus
- Develop positive values, sexuality
- Learn to love life more
- Experience God's love and forgiveness
- Gain a sense of purpose in my life
- Learn what is special about me
- Learn how to make choices and decisions





**Youth Discipleship**

A ministry of WELS Parish Services

A division of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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# REACH!

## A Great Witness from the LivingBold Boards

April posted on "So what does it mean to live bold?"...

*I've thought about this a lot especially when I saw the videos of the Columbine shootings. I've asked myself if I were ever put in a situation where those around me were scared of dying and looking to me for help, would I be able to tell them about Jesus? Also, I read in a Christian magazine, Brio, that a girl got shot at Columbine because the gunmen asked her if she was a Christian, she said yes, and she was shot because of that one word. Would I be able to do that? Would I be able to boldly declare my faith in Jesus? I know that with Christ's help I would be able to say, "Yes, Jesus is my Savior!"*

*There are so many hurting people out there looking for something to fulfill them. The only thing that can completely fill them up is Jesus. Who better than us teens can reach out to other teens with the gospel of Christ? Jesus never promised it would be easy. But just think of the horrible pain he endured for us at the cross. We can endure some for his sake. This is why we were born; this should be our mission for life: to be fishers of men for Jesus Christ.*

*Whenever doubt or fear creeps in just look to Jesus. He'll always have enough strength for you.*

Encourage your teens to share their thoughts at [www.livingbold.net/discuss](http://www.livingbold.net/discuss).

**Please contact us with any questions or for further information.**

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