



REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

Who Am I?

by Rev. Norman F. Burger, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church - Lansing, Michigan
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Our young people need to hear the simple gospel of Christ more than anything else. They need the ironclad certainty of his love and care for them imparted personally through their baptisms. The key to a congregation's youth ministry may be helping teens rediscover their spiritual roots.

Countless teenage boys have done it. They want a car but can't afford much. So they buy a junker for a couple hundred bucks. The salesperson promised, "All it needs is a little work." So they slap some body putty on it and get it painted. Voila! It looks like a new car. But that's never the end of the restoration, is it? The tires are shot and need to be replaced. The muffler holes soon get big enough that the car sounds like a tank. Another part to replace. Then what? Shocks. Brakes. Battery. The repairs never seem to end. And the fact is that after all the fixing, the familiar rattles, creaks, and shudders reveal that it still is what it was—a junker.



We live in a world in which the thinking about self-image is strikingly similar. Advertisements tell us that we are one tube of toothpaste, one pair of sneakers, one weight-loss program, one exercise machine, one brand of soft drink, or one good haircut away from being cool, attractive, confident, impressive, popular, and important. With the right "fix," we can feel good about ourselves. Never mind that, just as is true with that teen-owned junker, the need for fixing never seems to end. Never mind that, for all the fix-ups we try, we still remain wrecks—insecure, self-ish, superficial—or as we Christians say—sinful.

Our young people know they need fixing. They feel guilt and shame about everything that is wrong with them. Their world does

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Comments about this

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Pastor Says, THANKS!



I express my deepest thanks and appreciation for the recent Quarterly Newsletter for WELS Youth Workers, **REACH!** Spring, 2006. I thought every article was very well written and provided a lot of food for thought. [The articles] provide excellent suggestions for all pastors and youth workers to use as they deal with the youth in our congregations. I especially enjoyed reading

the first article on “Getting Down and Dirty with Those You Serve”, and I liked the questions that Professor David Sellnow asked in his article: “Do we do youth ministry largely with a negative goal - to keep youth from falling away? Ideally, our focus for youth is predominantly positive - to build them up in Christ and equip them to serve in Christ’s kingdom.” When I think back to my working with youth . . . I see where I failed in a few areas. I also saw how God in His grace through the working of His Holy Spirit did keep the youth faithful to the Word and prepared them for Christian service. Keep up the excellent work with this newsletter. May God richly bless all your efforts. (*Name withheld upon request.*)

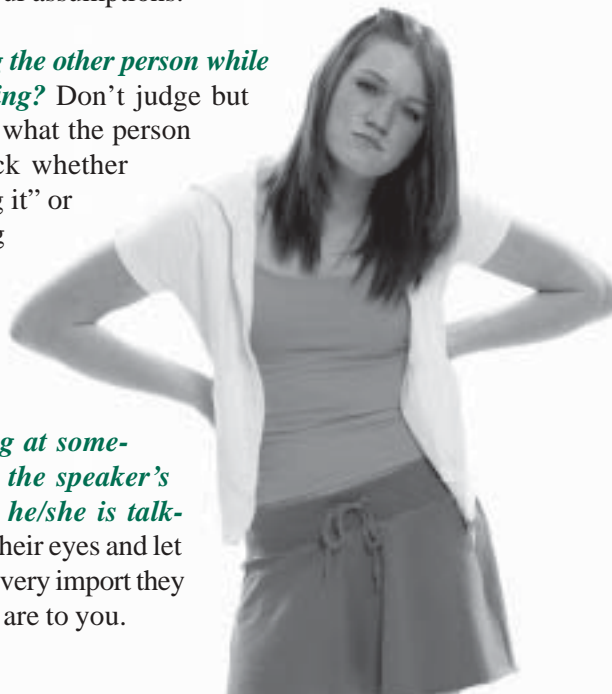
Hey, Are You Listening to Me?

When you are “listening” to a teen, parent, or some other individual, are you planning your answer while the other person is still speaking? If so, you are not listening.

Do you interrupt? Have you maybe guessed or second-guessed what the person is going to say? You could be wrong, so hold up on your assumptions.

Are you judging the other person while he/she is speaking? Don’t judge but rather focus on what the person is saying. Check whether you are “getting it” or not by asking questions or by paraphrasing what the person said.

Are you looking at something else over the speaker’s shoulder while he/she is talking? Look into their eyes and let them know how very import they and their words are to you.



(“Who Am I” . . . continued from page 1)

them no favors by telling them that a fix here or there is all they need to become worthwhile. Honest young people will realize with despair that most “fixes” are superficial and that there is never a point when we become who we want to be or, certainly, who God wants us to be. Those young people who are not that honest will attempt to convince themselves that they are OK, at least better than some others. We, as Christian leaders of our young people, do them no favors if our guidance is moralizing, that is, if we tell them that they need to be fixed and that they can feel better about themselves once they clean up their acts and start being what God wants them to be. That, too, leads to either despair or self-righteousness, depending on how honest our young people are with themselves.

How different is God’s truth of our identity though Baptism. Paul summarizes it in Romans 6:4: “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Paul leaves no room for self-deception or self-righteousness. Our baptisms are based on the truth that all of us are junkers beyond fixing, fit only to be discarded on the scrap heap.

So what did God do? He had his Son tow our sins away to the cross. There God crushed our sins when Jesus, our substitute, was crushed for our sins. Our baptisms link us to that act of divine demolition. Baptism assures us that God did something better for us than tell us how to get fixed up. It assures us that God took our unfixable sinful natures and got rid of them. He replaced them with the righteousness of his Son. We are God’s sin-free, guilt-forgiven, and dearly loved children.

If you were a teenager, wouldn’t you rather have a brand-new, better-than-you-could-ever-dream-you-could-have, top-of-the-line, world-class automobile for free than a junker that always costs you money because it always needs fixing? We have the privilege of assuring our young people that Baptism gives them a new model. It costs them nothing. It is better than they could dream of. It is eternally true and valid, despite what they see in themselves and in their lives. As baptized believers in Christ, when the Father looks at them, he sees Christ. He sees someone perfect, someone special, and someone he will always love and help and never abandon, no matter what. How inspiring that is to a child of God.

Walk In My World 2 Is Finished!

Walk In My World is a spiritual growth resource for use with teens and their parents. Originally conceived for teens and their parents to enjoy together, *Walk In My World* could also be used in settings of teens alone, and parents alone. *Walk In My World* has a reality-based, television newsmagazine feel to it. It chronicles how real WELS teens and their families wrestle with real life issues.



Walk In My World (Edition 1) presents the following lessons:

- Living for God in an Ungodly World
- Dealing with Divorce
- Following God's Plan with the Opposite Sex
- Coping When Trouble Hits Close to Home

Walk In My World (Edition 2) presents the following lessons:

- Witnessing Your Faith Among Your Peers
- Recovering from Addiction
- God Works Good Through Tragedy
- Living for Jesus and Touching Others



Each *Walk In My World* edition has four video episodes that are supported by a Bible study and discussion guide. The participant Bible studies and discussion guides can be reproduced as is from the blackline masters provided in the binder. They may also be tailored to your own situation by using the accompanying computer disc (PDF format).

The *Walk In My World* video episodes and Bible study/discussion guides, will draw participants into deeper discourse with each other and into a deeper understanding and appreciation for what God's Word says about our walk in this world. Each of the 10-15 minute *Walk In My World* video episodes "sets the table" and frames the relevant issue for teen/parent study. *Walk In My World* could be used in a variety of settings: teen Bible classes, teen retreats, parenting classes, sessions with teens and parents together, family retreats, and for home study (providing the Leader's Guide is used).

Walk in My World (Edition 1)

video, CD, leader's guide, and participant lessons
\$42.50 plus shipping/handling. (38-3089)

Walk in My World (Edition 2)

DVD, CD, leader's guide, and participant lessons
\$44.95 plus shipping/handling. (38-3150)

To order, go to www.nph.net/welsproducts or you may contact cyd@sab.wels.net

Check out www.youthministry.com for some great ideas, resources, insights, newsletters and more. This is not a WELS site, but can be of great value if you are discerning.

Teens Selected for National Service

After reviewing the nomination/application documents of 15 WELS teens (13 female/2male), three teens were selected to become members of the 2007 WELS International Youth Rally Planning Committee. They are Bethany Wehrenberg, Stephen Vandenberg, and Kayla Mundstock. Bethany, Stephen, and Kayla are the second group of teens to have ever served on this national committee. The first trio of teens (Lea Menning-Waukesha, WI; Laura Merklinger-Littleton, CO; and Crysta Miller-Rochester, MN) were appointed for the 2005 rally in Orlando, FL.



Bethany Wehrenberg

Bethany is a junior at St. Croix Lutheran High School in St. Paul, MN. She is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Burnsville, MN. Bethany was nominated by the youth leader in her congregation, Edie Stellick. According to Edie, "Bethany is actively involved in many activities and leadership roles in her high school as well as at our church. Her friendly personality is addictive and warming."

Stephen Vandenberg

Stephen is a sophomore at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, WI. He is a member of Riverview Lutheran Church in Appleton, WI. Stephen was nominated by the youth leader in his congregation, Greg Grunert. According to Greg, "Stephen recently attended the Youth Rally in Florida with our Youth Group. He was very impressed by what he saw and learned while at the rally. In fact he had some heated discussions about what is 'seen' on this earth and what is 'unseen' with his fellow rally-goers from the congregation."



Kayla Mundstock

Kayla is a junior at Arizona Lutheran Academy in Phoenix, AZ. She is a member of Deer Valley Lutheran Church in Phoenix. Kayla was nominated by the youth leader in her congregation, Mike Mundstock. According to Mike, "Kayla is not afraid of sharing her faith and being a great representative of Jesus. She has lived in several states growing up: Illinois, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida, and Arizona. This has led to her being familiar with change and meeting new people along with helping her shape her views on the world."



The Rally Planning Committee is (L-R) Dr. Joel A. Nelson, Administrator, Commission on Youth Discipleship; Kris Snyder, Rally Coordinator; Rev. Rich Warnecke, CYD Commission Member; Bethany Wehrenberg, Stephen Vandenberg, Kayla Mundstock, teen members; and Bob Mateske, CYD Admin Assistant. The entire committee will travel to Dallas this summer to continue their planning for the 2007 event.



Summer Teen Ministry Opportunities!

Greetings, Teen ministry leaders! I am Pastor Richard Warnecke, the administrator for Faith In Action at WELS Kingdom Workers. I am writing this to you to ask you to promote the summer opportunities still available to high school students and families this summer. If you are not the person at your church that should have received this request, please forward this to the person who could be help recruit for these mission opportunities!

Our website is www.welskingdomworkers.org If there is a group from your church or local churches that desire to participate, call me at 1-800-466-9357 to inform me of their desire. Unless it is already taken, I will work with the group to make the opportunity happen. All we ask of the students is their time, talent and testimony. WKW will get them to their host and back home. Their hosts will supply transportation while on site, room, board, and a ministry plan.

Once contact with me is established, the group then needs to fill out Faith in Action individual application forms which you may secure at our website. Send them in together and when received, I will coordinate their mission trip. Make sure spellings, all information, and chaperone information is correct.

In the green sidebar you will find a listing of trips for the summer of 2006. You may also secure these trips from our website. For more information, call me and I will share what I can.

If you have any questions, call me at 1-800-466-9357 or e-mail. I am in the office from 8:00am – 3:30pm daily unless in meeting. Remember...these are first come, first served. Applications must be on my desk to own the opportunity. I look forward working with you.

God bless!

Pastor Rich Warnecke



AVAILABLE SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Amazing Grace, Roscoe, IL . . . July 23 – 30
VBS assistance, 2-3 females

Emanuel, Flint, MI . . . July 29 – August 13
*Canvassing, VBS assistance,
4 students and chaperone*

Beautiful Savior, West Des Moines, IA
July 24 – August 13
*Canvassing and VBS;
4-5 students and chaperone*

Quebec, Ontario, CN . . . August 12 – 20
VBS, 4 students plus chaperone

Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, OK . . . July 8-14
*VBS assistance,
4 students, plus chaperone*

Kokomo, IN . . . July 24 – August 4
*VBS assistance,
4 students plus chaperone*

Knoxville, TN . . . June 3-10
*canvassing,
4 students plus chaperone*

Long Valley, NJ; July 29 . . . August 12
*canvassing, and VBS assistance,
2 students plus chaperone*

Columbus, OH . . . August 3-10
*VBS assistance,
4 students plus chaperone*

La Porte, IN
(One week mid-late June)
*canvassing, 4 students
plus one chaperone*

Fort Morgan, CO . . . July 9-22
*Soccer camp, Spanish speaking
necessary, 2 students plus chaperone*

Vacaville, CA
(Two weeks late July or early August)
*canvassing, VBS assistance,
Spanish speaking necessary,
2 students plus chaperone*

Valrico, FL . . . July 8-16
*VBS day camp assistance,
4 students plus chaperone*

Dousman, WI . . . June 17 – 24
*VBS assistance, 6 students
plus 1-2 chaperones*

Milwaukee, Camp Trees . . . July 24-30
*4 female, 4 male
students, 1-2 chaperones*

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REACH!

Laugh Out Loud in Dallas!

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" ~ Philippians 4:4



WELS Youth Rally 2007

The 2007 WELS International Youth Rally will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dallas, TX, beginning on Wednesday, July 4th and running until noon on Saturday, July 7th. The rally theme chosen by the planning committee is: **LOL - Laugh Out Loud!** 3,500 participants will be planned for.

You can learn more about the 2007 rally as well as this summer's awesome district youth rallies at www.welsyouthrally.net. Keep checking this site for further updates. As soon as new information becomes available, it will be posted.

Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship
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