



REACH!

Produced by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Commission on Youth Discipleship

C² Is Connecting Teens to Christ

by Pastor Michael Jensen, St. Mark's Lutheran Church - Watertown, WI

Today's teenagers are busier than ever. That makes it difficult to find times to meet with them to keep them connected to Christ through his Word. Still, with a little effort and investigation creative ways can be found. One way our congregation found is something we call C².

C² is short hand for *Christ Connection* and is designed to keep high school students connected to Christ, each other and their congregation. *Christ Connection's* target audience is our public high school students, but what really makes C² unique is when it takes place . . . *during the school day!*

If this sounds a little strange to you, you're not alone. That's how it hit me almost five years ago when I first heard of the possibility. I never knew that most states have laws that allow parents to have their public school students released from the school day in order to receive religious instruction. But, they do and we've been able to turn it into an opportunity to keep our kids connected to Christ.

Working with our high school's administration, C² has reserved two class periods on two Mondays each month. On those days we . . .

- ◆ bus the students from high school to church, (*Religious instruction can't take place on public school grounds.*)
- ◆ have a 20 minute Bible study, followed by a 20 minute mixer activity,
- ◆ serve lunch - usually pizza or subs,
- ◆ bus the students back to the high school in time for fifth period.

What's been amazing is all the blessings Christ has given to this ministry.

- ◆ We've been able to meet our original goals for five years now.
- ◆ We at times have had as many as 50 students in attendance!

(Continued on next page)

IN THIS ISSUE

Teens Selected for National Service.....2

Resource Recommendation.....2

Book Review.....3

A Great December Service Project.....4

Could You Help Dick?.....5

Building From the Ground Up.....5

AND MUCH MORE!

Comments about this

REACH!

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

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Teens Selected for National Service

*By: Joel A. Nelson,
WELS Youth Discipleship Administrator*

After much prayer and discussion on the part of the four person selection committee, three WELS teens were appointed to serve on the WELS International Youth Rally Planning Committee. The teens are Laura Merklinger, a junior from Heritage High School in Littleton, CO; Lea Menning, a junior from West High School in Waukesha, WI; and Crysta Miller, a home schooled sophomore from Rochester, MN. One alternate was also selected in case any of the main appointees cannot fulfill their duties. She is Emily Giertych, a junior from Tomah, WI who attends Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, WI.

All together, ten WELS teens – nine girls and one boy – were nominated for the three new positions on the Rally Planning Committee. Six teens were from WELS prep or area Lutheran high schools, three were from public high schools, and one was home schooled. Seven teens were from Wisconsin, one was from Michigan, one from Minnesota, and one from Colorado. Five of the teens are currently juniors in high school, and five are currently sophomores. [Check out the *LivingBold* website (www.livingbold.net) for the complete list of nominees.]

The recommendation letters included with the other application materials, demonstrated that all ten of the teens were very gifted, dedicated, and spiritual individuals. The Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) could not have had a better list of candidates for this first ever selection process. Determining the three finalists and one alternate was extremely difficult.

Laura, Lea, and Crystal will travel to Milwaukee in January for their first face-to-face meeting with the other members

of the Rally Planning Committee. Later on, they will make the trip to the 2005 Youth Rally site (Orlando, FL) to help with on-going planning for the rally.

On behalf of the Commission on Youth Discipleship, I want to thank all of the teen nominees and all those who took the time to write nomination letters. This new and historic venture on CYD's part is being developed as we go, and the Lord has given us three amazing teens who will make the process one about which we'll soon say, "Why didn't we think of this before?"

Resource Recommendation: *Seven Teen Essentials*

<www.pointofpower.com> is a small e-commerce company that produces Bible study supplements for religious leaders. Some of the studies are simply supplements, others are complete studies with student and teacher guides. The operators of the company are Pastor Mark Schulz and his wife Jeanne, two WELS members.

One of their most recent products is "Seven Teen Essentials", a seven session PowerPoint study for teenagers. On the CD disk you have both student and teacher guides in txt. or doc. files. You can simply load them up, and print them from your printer, and make as many copies as necessary. The Powerpoint files are in ppt. files and include the topics: Alcohol, Image, Peer Pressure, Stress, Love-Dating-Sex, Finances, and Music.

These studies are great for lock-ins, youth retreats, and teen Bible studies and can be used year after year for a basic core course for teenagers. The cost is \$23.00 per CD disk, and you can order directly from the website shopping cart via Mastercard or Visa.

(C² . . . Continued from page 1)

- ♦ The structure especially helps us reach our at risk teens.
- ♦ Our students have been bringing their friends! (*Think about it: What's easier for a teen to say? "Do you want to go to church? Or, "Hey, want to get out of school and have some pizza?"*)
- ♦ Our congregation now runs C² with three other area WELS congregations that have teens at the same high school. This C² partnership has paved the way for other joint ministries, including the opening of a teen recreation and outreach center in our city!

Obviously, the way such a ministry might work will differ from congregation to congregation. But, it's another opportunity and one worth checking out. We're glad we did!

To learn more contact Pastor Jensen:
[<mtjensen@execpc.com>](mailto:mtjensen@execpc.com)
or call 920-262-8505.

Book Review

Purpose Driven Youth Ministry

A Review by Tim Schultz

Youth Minister at Christ Lutheran Church in North St. Paul, MN

In his book, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (1998), Pastor Doug Fields has identified nine components of youth ministry. If you are like me, looking for a road map to develop a youth ministry, this book is certainly worth your time.

As the title states the focus of his book is on creating a youth ministry with a purpose.

The reader is taken into the Scripture to discover five purposes for the church: fellowship, ministry, evangelism, discipleship, and worship. With an understanding of these purposes a youth leader and youth committee can develop their own personal purpose statement that will drive their ministry to their youth.

How is a ministry driven through a purpose statement? The purpose statement is the filter that all activities, programs, events, Bible Studies, etc. are filtered through. Our youth and their families are too busy today, so the church must offer them what is vitally necessary for their spiritual growth.

But as Pastor Fields points out, his ministry is not the same as your ministry, just as my ministry is not the same as yours. His book is not intended to be cut and pasted into our ministries. He provides us with the framework, what will hold our ministries together, while we flesh it out to meet the needs of the youth and families in our own congregations.

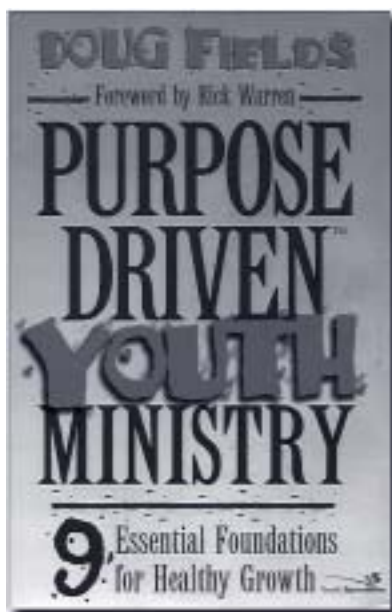
One component of his book that I found especially beneficial is in Chapter 5. Here he points out that in many congregations

youth can be placed into one of five categories. He calls this identifying the commitment of your student or the youth around your church. Those youth that do not know Jesus as their Savior have commitments to this world and themselves. At the other end, the youth in our congregation should have a commitment to personal and corporate Bible Study, regular church attendance, prayer, and service to their Lord. Truthfully, we would find it difficult to place many of the youth in our congregations into this category. There is nothing wrong with this though. This becomes the benchmark or bulls eye for our ministry.

Pastor Fields also has practical advice that we can use to make our youth ministries shining beacons of our

congregations. He helps us to turn parents into leaders instead of drivers and to find adults that are the leaders our youth deserve. He reminds us of the importance of being family friendly, the place where youth ministry can truly take place.

There are tips on positive discipline, handling pressure, developing projects, and dealing with time demands. I can not say that this book has all of the answers. But it is a good starting point and a resource that can be used in our ministry to the souls of those youth inside and outside of our congregations. God's blessings to you in your ministry! (Order from Northwestern Publishing #153736, \$17.99, 1-800-662-6022)



Reader Reactions

John Schmoller from Trinity in Watertown, WI had this reaction to Pastor Wayne Laitinen's article *Worship for Teens: Staying Alive or Not (REACH! Fall 2003)*:

I don't disagree with Rev. Laitinen's observations about teen worship. The question, however, is not solely whether WELS teens like the hymns and liturgies of the WELS. Do [non-WELS] like it? It is important to continue ministering to WELS teens' tastes, but the more difficult question is how to "crossover" worship to American society without offending those trained in European worship styles.

2005 Youth Rally Goes to Florida

The next WELS International Youth Rally will be held in Orlando, Florida. The Rally Planning Committee is in the final negotiation stages with hotels that can accommodate a group of our size, provide the necessary worship and workshop spaces needed, and have us in close proximity to several recreation options. More details will be coming soon. Watch for them!



A Great December Service Project

By: *Charlotte Schears*
Grace Lutheran Church, Waupun, WI



I have a suggestion for a service project in early December which has worked well for our youth group. We contacted the activity director at the nursing home in our town to set up a night for our group to come in and help address and sign Christmas cards for the residents. For several years now, we have been doing this and it is a favorite of the residents and staff.

We purchase several boxes (a dozen or more!) of Christmas cards from our Ladies Guild making sure we also have a few boxes suitable for a grandparent to send to a grandchild or great grandchild. We usually have 10 or more teens and a couple of adults come to the home around 6:00 PM. on the second Tuesday of December. The staff has worked with the residents to get address books, telephone books or lists of addresses from relatives of the residents ahead of time.

Each teen teams up with a resident and sits next to them at a table. Several residents have their favorite teen they will ask for year after year. Some of the teens will go to the rooms of any residents who are confined to bed to assist them. They go over the list and start selecting the cards they wish to send. Some only want to do a couple and we have others which have lists of 25 -30! If the resident is able to sign the card we have them do that. If not the teens sign it for them. The teen then addresses the envelope and sometimes the resident will want a short note added to the card so they dictate that to the teen and they write that up for them.

As they do the cards they talk to the people about their lives and families. As they read the Bible passages in the cards or look at the pictures they can ask them about memories of past Christmas services they took part in or went to. It is an opportunity to share the love of their Savior with these people and talk about the wondrous Christmas story. Many of our teens have been apprehensive going to this project the first time, but are eager to help the next year. Many have a very different view of the elderly after this experience. Most of our teens agree that they gain even more from this project than the residents do!

By 8:00 the cards have been written. We have brought along a couple of rolls of stamps and put them on the envelopes. The cards are mailed at the post office on our way home. In two short hours friendships have been made. The residents possibly have a different view of our youth and the youth have a new respect for the elderly. We can tell by all of the smiles our time has been well spent. The staff has said the residents talk about it during the weeks after. Their friends and relatives are surprised to have received the nice Christmas cards from them and have been grateful for the time the youth spent helping their loved ones.

If anyone would like to know more about implementing this project please contact me at <char_schears@hotmail.com>.



Lines

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A pastor was frustrated with the continual excuses from people who did not attend church. So he made up his own list of "Reasons Why I Do Not Wash."

- I was made to wash as a child.
- People who wash are hypocritical. They claim they are cleaner than other folks.
- There are so many different types of soap, I couldn't decide which one was right for me.
- I used to wash, but it got boring so I quit.
- I still wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter.
- None of my friends wash.
- I'm still young. I'll wash when I'm older and a bit more dirty.
- I really don't have time to wash.
- The people who make soap are only after your money.

Could You Help Dick?

Dick Diener (dienerd@wi.rr.com), teen Bible study leader at Our Savior in Grafton, WI would like to explore using audio/video chat software with teens during his regular Bible study time. He'd like to connect his teens with another group of teens elsewhere (U.S., North America, world??). And, he'd like to do this with off-the-shelf products.

Dick's teen class meets on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:15 am. He is using a Mac running OS X and Apple's iChat AV software with an iSight camera/mic. In addition, his church/school has high-speed internet access through RoadRunner. He'd be projecting through an LCD projector for the class to see and participate.

The other group would need either matching equipment (Mac running OS X, iChat AV, iSight camera/mic and high-speed internet access. This should provide full screen video with audio and text chatting) or compatible equipment (PC or Mac, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger and high-speed internet access. But, this setup would likely be video and text chatting, but not audio).

If you're interested in descriptions of the products he's using, here are some links -

<http://www.apple.com/macosex/>

<http://www.apple.com/ichat/>

<http://www.apple.com/isight/>

Note, the combination of iChat with an iSight camera is optimized to do this type of task quite well. Hopefully, there's somebody else out there with this setup. It would be interesting to attempt a Web-based dialogue between two groups of WELS teens. If you are interested, contact Dick right away.



Date

Fri.-Sun. September 17-19, 2004

Location

Near Chicago, IL (exact site still being negotiated)

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.

Theme

"Building from the Ground Up"

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 Booksotre

Cost

\$135/person covers everything-lodging, meals, materials...everything!

Watch for more information coming soon!

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



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Commission on Youth Discipleship

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Rally Talk and Studies Done

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>. # 38-3088. \$15.95 + shipping.

SMILE III Conference

Special Ministries in Lutheran Education (SMILE) III Conference will be held on the campus of Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 West Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI on July 16-18th, 2004. The theme for the conference is "Equipping to Share the Joy." Watch your mailbox for more information in the coming months. Questions may be directed to Bruce Cuppan at (920) 922-8672 or <bncuppan@excel.net>.

It's here! Check it out!
www.livingbold.net



Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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