

THE CONTACT

aflc youth worker's newsletter

Fall 2011

Are You Too Old To Do



Youth Ministry?

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Staying Relational in the Youth Ministry World as a Leader

By Rich & Rhoda Niles
Newark, IL

Are you too old for youth ministry when you are awake at 3am and that's when you finally have time to write an article? Are you too old for youth ministry when your youth are totally into cyberspace techno devices and you don't know what they are....or maybe you can no longer dive for a volleyball or football without the following phrase "I've fallen and I can't get up"...or the thought of a "Lock-In" sends you into a panic because you will need two weeks to recover...or the youth start talking about their favorite music; so what does Satellites & Sirens and Switch-foot have to do with music? When is it time to hang up your hat that says on the front "I love youth"?

"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God."

Acts 20:24 (NLT)

That's the verse that I chose to be my life verse in 1970 while sitting on a Vietnam hillside while in the Army. So in my opinion, you're never too old to love people. (Kids are people too!) We need to plan another HOWOP for our youth. (Hang out with old people.) It's that simple!

Staying Relational in the Youth Ministry World as Parents/Family

By Lisa Arneson
Fosston, MN

Picture the 'typical' youth worker.....young, college-age guy, with facial hair of some sort, wearing a Batman t-shirt every week, guitar over his shoulder, with lots of stories to tell.

Well, that's not me!! I'm just a mom with teenage boys. I am not cool and I have no facial hair. I am a nice person, but I'm not the life of the party. But I do lead the Wednesday night meetings at our church. Has God still been able to use me, despite me? Do I actually have some advantages over the young college guy? Being a 'mom', 'dad' or 'grandparent' leading the youth group is cool because.....

You may be filling a 'role' in a young person's life that is needed. The homes of some students lack stability, routine, conversation. Some homes lack a father, mother or grandparents. You can help fill that void.

You have the benefit of life experience. When planning an event, you are more likely to know what behavior boundaries to put in place, how to handle teenage romances, or how many pizzas to order.

You have the benefit of life experience. Yes, that is a repeat. In your years on this earth, you have seen how God can walk beside you and carry you through death, illness and personal struggles. When you are leading a Bible discussion, you can speak from experience about the truth of God's Word. You can in turn walk beside a young person. Shania, a 9th grader in our youth group, affectionately calls my husband and I "Papa Alan and Mama Lisa".....I'll take that!

Coffee Shop



Youth Workers Retreat

January 20-22, 2012



Encourage Hearts & Equip Hands

WHY YWR?

- ◆ Renewal from God's Word
- ◆ Refreshment from God's people
- ◆ Revitalize with practical tools

Leaving YWR...

- ◆ With encouragement in your role
- ◆ With networking alongside likeminded leaders
- ◆ With 12 youth lessons and 3 methods
- ◆ With a fresh view of your disciple-making task

Visit our [website](#) to see the event schedule as well as the 2012 Youth Workers Retreat [Brochure](#).

Cost:

Postmarked BY January 6th: \$40

Postmarked AFTER January 6th: \$70

*The Youth Board has invested additional funds into this years YWR. The best rate is HALF of last years registration. PLEASE take advantage of this opportunity!

Youth Worker's Retreat | January 20-22, 2012 | Registration

Name _____ Male _____ Female _____

Address _____ DOB _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Mail Registration money and form to: Youth Workers Retreat
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd
Plymouth, MN 55441



Reference Room

Are You Too Old For Youth Ministry?

by Pastor Tim Johnson

God has a real sense of humor. While serving in my first two churches as a full-time pastor, the responsibilities and the needs of ministry only allowed me a limited time to spend with the youth. I taught them in confirmation but had volunteers meet with them on most Wednesday nights. I had speaking opportunities at youth retreats and camps, but just didn't have time to regularly meet with the youth.

Then, as a 46 year old pastor, God called me to my home church to be their senior pastor with youth ministry being a significant part of my job description as the church also called a semi-retired pastor to be their part-time associate. I struggled with my part of the call and argued with God, "Youth ministry? Me? I'm too old! I'm not in tune with the youth culture. I don't know how to conduct youth ministry." I could have come up with hundreds of reasons why I was not cut out for youth ministry. I'm sure that God just smiled and thought, "Ahh. I can use this attitude. He doesn't think he can do it. This is going to be fun."

Far too often we tend to think that ministry depends upon our abilities or knowledge. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, knew the secret of strength through weakness. Complimented once by a friend on the impact of the mission, Hudson answered, "It seemed to me that God looked over the whole world to find a man who was weak enough to do His work, and when He at last found me, He said, 'He is weak enough—he'll do.' All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them."

So, I am now doing youth ministry and the group has grown to 30 youth on Wednesday nights with larger groups for special events. Is it tiring? Yes. Is it challenging? Yes. Is it a blessing? Yes. Youth are not looking for perfection or all entertainment. Our regular youth group meetings consist of a game and a Bible study/discussion with prayer. The youth are looking for someone who genuinely cares about them and for some place where they can be themselves.

Throughout Scripture, youth have been a major part of God's ministry. King Josiah, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, the virgin Mary, Jesus while twelve and teaching in the temple, etc. were all used mightily by God in their teens or younger. Since we have the same God today, I have to conclude that youth have an important ministry in God's Kingdom. Perhaps this is why there is such a worldly attack upon the youth culture. Therefore, it is vital that the church spend significant time and resources in order to disciple them.

Do youth sometimes do dumb things? Yes. Do they sometimes show disrespect toward people and property? Yes. Are they sometimes irresponsible? Yes. Could we say these things about adults? Yes. Youth are in the development phase of life and dealing with many life issues for the first time while fewer parents understand their Biblical role in parenthood. Our youth need discipleship and support!

Youth need a caring setting that will help them understand the Savior and His plan for them. They need a place of unconditional love with clear direction and boundaries. They need adults who will offer them a healthy connection to life in Christ. Those who do not have the energy to run with youth can prayer partner with them, share their testimony and send them notes of encouragement. The need transcends age.

Oh that we could catch the heart of the old psalmist in *Psalms 71:17-18*, "O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come."

Johnson serves at Christ the King Free Lutheran Church in Pipestone, MN.

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Give Encouragement
Give Encouragement!!!

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Share Testimony

Clear Direction

Support

Boundaries

CADRE'S DISCIPLEMAKING GENIUS OF JESUS

<http://cadreministries.com/training/cc>

A series of training and evaluating notes will spur you on in following Jesus together.

DAILY YOUTH MINISTRY EMAIL

<http://www.simplyyouthministry.com/newsletter1.html>

Simply Youth Ministry has a range of regular emails that provide food for leader thought.

KINDLE FOR FREE ON YOUR PC

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?ie=UTF8&docId=1000426311>

Like the idea of an e-reader, but you don't want another device? Download the free Kindle PC app.

SKIT GUYS ON PARENTING

<http://skitguys.com/blog/post/13-parenting-skits-and-videos/>

Yes, they are funny! But did you know they can be serious? Did you know they have scripts for skits?

YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

<http://youthleadership.org/Training.aspx>

Did you know that in addition to 3-day and 3-hour opportunities that YL added 1-day seminars? Worth your time.



What Does Age Have To Do With Youth Ministry?

By Pastor Jason Holt

85 or 86? Age is strange.

I have watched 13 year-olds feel “too old” and 93 year-olds act young. In working alongside teenagers the last couple decades, I am starting to conclude that age is not a great indicator of anything. Tell me someone is a teenager and you have told me more about the stage than the age. It is the stage of dealing with friends, physical maturations, parents, grades at school, part-time jobs, pressures galore and much more. In addition, many times these are the years that a formative understanding develops of who God is, what the Lord has done through the cross and resurrection, and who a believer is in Christ. But I am growing in a new observation...

Youth ministry age is even stranger.

In partnering with adults that are concerned about the spiritual lives of teenagers, I have seen that many of us have endorsed the “if the leaders are close in age to the teenagers, then they can communicate better” adage or its close proverb, “No teen will listen to old people.” Are there young adults that can communicate God’s Word well? Yes. But does that eliminate all other ages older than that? Definitely not. Also I am wondering more than ever as I get older (and I find zero release from the Lord’s call on my life to intersect in the lives of teenagers and those that work with teenagers), do those premises above say more about teenagers or more about us? Are these thoughts Scriptural?

The example of Caleb in Joshua 14:6-12 comes to my mind. Yes, the same Caleb of “Joshua and Caleb” accounts. *Twelve men went to spy on Canaan; ten were bad and two were good.* (Can you do the actions to the song?) This Caleb has now walked through the wilderness. He has watched the Israelites over forty years have an entire generation pass away because of their grumbling against the Lord. Now under Joshua, the Israelites had conquered the Promised Land. It was time to divide it among the people when Caleb spoke up.

“Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. ...” (Verses 10-12)

Caleb was 85. He was strong and active. He was willing to be used by the Lord and was ready to rely on God’s promises. Caleb’s commendation was that he had followed the Lord “wholeheartedly.” This follower of the One True God was not concerned about his age. Caleb was chasing His pursuit of what God had for him. As he stood among a highly youth-oriented group (God’s announcement in Numbers 14:26-35), he influenced this next generation to trust in the Lord.

In contrast in our culture, we have the next number: 86. A combination of digits that has come to mean being cut off, eliminated, or left out. You want to 86 the telemarketer that calls during supper as much as possible. There is stuff in my garage that I would like to 86. Have we allowed established adult believers with a heart for the next generation to be 86?

A teenager once told me that a youth leader doesn’t have to be young, but “young at heart”. Her insight is a good reminder to us. Caleb demonstrated the “young at heart” reality that shows itself in confidence through trust in the Lord. So which one are you – 85 or 86? If you have been 86, it is time to move to 85. Allow God’s heart for this generation of young people to overwhelm your doubts. The Lord’s promises are just as sure today as in Caleb’s time.

May our Savior King strengthen us to be 85 until we are 85...or older!

Holt, the National Director of Youth Ministries for the AFLC, serves as volunteer Youth Director for Living Hope Lutheran Church, St. Michael – Albertville, MN

THE CONTACT

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 11-12, 2011 District Overnight	Tioga, ND Contact- Matthew Rieniets (701) 664-2188
Nov. 18-20, 2011 District Youth Retreat	Sioux Falls, SD Contact- Adam McCarlson (605) 371-3800
Jan. 20-22, 2012 Youth Worker's Retreat	ARC, Osceola, WI youth@aflc.org
March 25, 2012 SWC MN District Youth Rally	Fergus Falls, MN Contact - Pastor Jim Johnson (219) 736-4282
July 16-20, 2012 FLY Beyond	ARC, Osceola, WI

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The Contact is published twice a year to encourage and engage youth workers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The AFLC is a growing fellowship of 275 churches whose members believe that the Bible is true and that everyone needs Jesus. AFLC Youth Ministries exist for three goals: to win; to build; and to equip youth for Jesus Christ. We are here to assist in making disciples!

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