

THE CONTACT

AFLC YOUTH WORKER'S NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2015

Summer Time



tc

How I Utilize Summer in Youth Ministry

By Chris Rasmussen

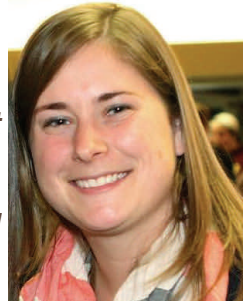
Youth group attendance can be hit or miss for us during the summer. Some Wednesday nights we will have 15 teens and other Wednesday nights we will have 3 teens. During the summer we tend to be more flexible with what we do and we also try to make plenty of time for fun activities. Sometimes we meet at a park near by, grill hot dogs and have everyone bring something to share (normally chips and Mountain Dew). After a short devotional time we all just have fun hanging out together as a group.

My husband Joel and I have been co-youth leaders with Jon and Hannah Langness for the past 3 years. The end of May this year they left for Jon's seminary internship. The youth group had a going away party for them and during that time the kids shared stories and thanked Jon and Hannah for all they had done for them during their time as youth leaders. There were

so many stories the kids told about how much of an impact Jon and Hannah had in their lives and a lot of the stories were from the "hang out" times. Frisbee golf, movie night, getting coffee, going to their sporting events. Meeting them where they are at and doing what they are interested in.

Using the summer to be intentional spending time with the kids doing what they want to do, whether it's golfing, going out for ice cream, or just hanging out at the park, is something Joel and I enjoy and also something I think and hope is valuable for them as well.

*Chris is a youth leader at
Grace Free Lutheran Church,
Maple Grove MN*



Coffee Shop

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible. The person's left hand is on the left page, and their right hand is holding a dark-colored mug. The Bible is open to a page with dense text, and the lighting is warm and focused on the book and the hands.

YOUTH WORKERS WEEKENDS

January 8-10, 2016

Youth Workers Weekends is the new training and refreshing event for volunteer and vocational youth leaders from AFLC Youth Ministries. Our annual gathering will be January 8-10, 2016 at the Association Retreat Center.

This year's theme is "Tools of the Trade" as we examine ways to sharpen skills on adapting curriculum to your context, integrating teaching with interaction, and engaging parents of teens. This training is more than one weekend with video conferencing and district contacts to continue equipping throughout the year.

The best rate deadline for \$100 per person is 12/12/2015. The rate increases \$20 after that date.



Reference Room

By Pastor Jason Holt

“Making the Most of Your Summer...Before It Ends”

One of my oddest summer activities as a teen growing up was outdoor basketball in the warmest weather possible. For some reason, my adolescent brain was convinced that the combination of drills for the court with the temperature hitting triple digits was a maximum training environment. Apparently I am a forefather of hot yoga without the knowledge or the credit...or the yoga.

The thought of doing this kind of exercise now is rather discouraging as I picture my 40-something frame unable to carry out much in the realm of hoops dreams, not to mention the impending heat stroke and heart attack. Although my method may have been unusual, the goal I had in mind has some merit. **Making the most of your summer is something that many of us did when we were younger and very few of us do as adult leaders.** I am wondering with you – what would it look like to make the most of your summer before it ends?

Three areas came to my mind when I reflected on this question. Allow me to expand on these key words for me: **Create. Carry. Consider.**

(1) Create space for a longer time of connections during the summer.

This first one I have found myself regularly overlooking. For some of us, it takes planning to be spontaneous. Mark it on your calendar for open space to connect with family, with friends, and with the teens and parents the Lord has brought you alongside of to point to His grace. For the rest of us eager for spur-of-the-moment activity, allow space for the people and not simply the task at hand. A road trip is not valuable only because you get from one location to another, but for the conversations and memories that develop between people.

In **John 3:22**, Jesus moves out into the Judean countryside to spend time with the disciples. Immediately after the context of the rich theology of Jesus as the Son of God and as the Object of faith (anyone know John 3:16?), the Savior of the world prioritizes the people around Him.

What one step would make a significant impact on your contacting remaining this summer?

(2) Carry the goal of training teens to lead and serve.

This second one I am regularly trumpeting, but I need to evaluate how well I am doing it in God's strength.

Last year, I heard Doug Clark from the National Network of Youth Ministries (NNYM) make a statement that has strongly stuck with me. Doug expressed, *"We need to move from seeing students as objects of ministry to agents of ministry."*

It seems as if our congregations, and at times even us as adults, get stuck in seeing teens as objects to be ministered "to" instead of identifying the teen believers as agents of ministry to serve "with". In discussing this one during the month of May with other youth workers, everyone affirmed it is needed. Are we spending so much time trying to make sure teens "get it right" before inviting into service? Did we forget that each child of God in Jesus has the same Word and same Spirit that we do?

I Peter 2:4-5 – "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

God's Word explains that through the death of Christ (the rejected Son of God) that our foundation is sure on Him. But the passage then brings the insight that all people (no matter the age) are being built up to offer spiritual sacrifices. The Word and the Spirit are continuing to renew God's people for Kingdom service, which is a service that is offered in the strength of Jesus.

When I pause and remember that it is Peter (yes – the "denied-Him-three-times" Peter) that the Holy Spirit inspired to record these words, it hits me even harder. I do not deserve God's forgiveness. I do not have a footing apart from Jesus. And yet, the Heavenly Father offers forgiveness, a position as His child, AND a calling for Kingdom investment to you and me...and to teens.

The more I study Jesus' life and ministry the more I am in awe of His confidence in them, because of His working in them. The more I see the Savior King transferring leadership to the disciples the more I remember I need to carry the goal of training and releasing.

What do you need to carry this month by releasing it?

(3) Consider your own growth as a leader.

What you do need? No, it is not five million dollars. It is

also not five more adult volunteers (although that would be nice!). Your growth as a Kingdom servant leader will have direct impact on your influence with the teens and families in your congregation and community.

It has been said the more we learn, the less we know. As we minister with teens and their families, this reality comes up often. It drives me to recall my position in Christ and the process that he is renewing me in.

Galatians 2:20-21 – "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."

We celebrate Christ in you, the hope of glory! It is His righteousness and a life of faith in Jesus. Keep the foundation in view and ask Him how He wants to stretch you as a leader. The last couple years I have benefitted from looking at resources on youth and family ministry with others and from networking with leaders for prayer and sharpening.

Where do you want to grow as a leader? Who exemplifies this skill? When will you approach him/her about it for prayer and interaction on it? Will it be before this summer moves into fall activities?

A Difference

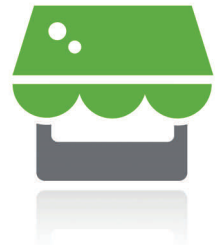
The timeless cartoon series Calvin & Hobbes once featured a pithy exchange between Calvin and his dad. Calvin's dad is imploring his son to get up early and to seize the day. His dad explains to the pint-sized, drowsy lad that treating a day off in slumber is a waste. His dad emphasizes that when Calvin is older and tirelessly working at a job that Calvin will wish he made the most of the free time he has right now.

Calvin's reply was simply, "At least I can tell the difference between work and free time."

Will this season be different for you? I am praying and rooting for you that it will be.

*Pastor Jason Holt is the
National Youth Director for the AFLC*

Convenience Store



20 Free Resources for High School Transition

<http://bit.ly/1SwKJ3U>



17+ Free Training Pieces for Youth Ministry

<http://bit.ly/1K1YYuN>



5 Things Your Senior Pastor Won't Tell You

<http://bit.ly/1TBKpCC>



1 Goal: Every School, Every Student

<http://bit.ly/1LokBnK>



Urgent Care

SUMMER DROUGHT?

How are you doing? Yes, how are you really doing in your own soul?

Psalm 32:3-4

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

Eight years ago, Pastor Kevin Olson told me to watch out for the spiritual lives of the vocational and volunteer youth leaders in our AFLC family. My predecessor had watched for over a decade that the role of leadership can squeeze people into putting on an “I’ve-got-it-all-together” front, especially in youth ministry.

Why is this temptation there?

For me, the thought of confessing our sin to the Lord is comforting, but to confess to close brothers and sisters in Christ is scary. The mind races, “What if they really knew? What if they disqualified me? What if...?”

David’s words admit that a leader, even a leader after the heart of God, deals with sin. He expresses precisely that the drain inside from unconfessed sin is bringing a drought to the soul.

Do not allow guilt to guide. Listen to where the chapter goes next.

Psalm 32:5

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Talented leaders, you consistently point teens wrestling with the guilt of their sins to the blood of Jesus. It is so good that you do. Now remind yourself of this truth! Allow God’s full forgiveness in Christ to wash over your scarlet letter!

We tell teens to not go it alone in this walk of faith, so why do we convince ourselves that we are any different. The stance that is received from the Lord is one that is confident in Him and is ready to step forward serving in His strength.

Psalm 32:1-2

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

*Pastor Jason Holt
Is the National Youth Director
for the AFLC*



Upcoming Events

Wed Sept 23	See You At The Pole—Global Day of Student Prayer, Theme: “UNITED” www.syatp.com
Oct 16 -18	AFLBS Campus Days—Fall Bible School Visit, Minneapolis MN www.aflbs.org
Jan 8-10, 2016	Youth Workers Weekends- National Youth Leaders Gathering, Osceola WI www.aflc.org/youth/events/youth-workers-weekends/
Feb 5-7, 2016	ARC Winter Retreats—Side x Side (Gr. 7-12) Sno Daze (Gr. 4-7) www.arc-aflc.org
March 11-13, 2016	AFLBS Campus Days—Spring Bible School Visit, Minneapolis MN www.aflbs.org
June 18—22, 2016	FLY Beyond 2016—National Youth Equipping Conference, Osceola WI www.aflc.org/youth/events

THE CONTACT

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Youth Ministries Department
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, MN 55441
E-mail: youth@aflc.org

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 multiplying making disciples!



Editor Pastor Jason Holt
AFLC Youth Ministries
National Youth Director
Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:30pm
jasonholt@aflc.org

Managing Editor Chris Rasmussen
AFLC Youth Ministries
Administrative Assistant
Mon-Fri. 8:00am-4:30pm
chr isr@aflc.org