

Youth Ministry Resources

Life-Forming Practices, New Vitality

*My God, how I burned with longing to have wings to carry me back to you . . .
although I had no idea what you would do with me!*

—Augustine, reflecting on his youth from *Confessions*

Shortly before his death, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was asked, “What message have you for young people?” Heschel replied, “Let them remember that there is a meaning beyond absurdity. Let them be sure that every deed counts, that every word has power, and that we all can do our share to redeem the world in spite of all absurdities and all frustrations and all disappointments. . . . And above all, [let them] remember . . . to build a life as if it were a work of art.”



For the last several months, we’ve taken a long look at our collection of resources, reevaluating what is timeless and treasured and what might be dated and not as helpful as it once was. We’ve also had numerous conversations with youth leaders and others involved in youth ministry in order to share some of the most helpful resources being used. Many of these are available from this synod’s resource center, from the E L C A , and from other youth ministry sources. We hope you will find here some helpful materials for vital, cutting-edge ministry with young people.

Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel

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BOOKS and ARTICLES

Recent articles in *The Lutheran* magazine focus on youth ministry and its central place in congregational life. Many of us have been the privileged recipients of vital youth ministry that marked us in all kinds of ways. Julie Sevig, section editor for *The Lutheran*, calls the children and youth of our church—and the adults who work and play and learn with them—our “finest treasure.”

“**Youth Ministry Comes in All Sizes**” and “**Youth or Consequences**” are titles of two articles from *The Lutheran* about changing youth ministry. Go to www.thelutheran.org/feature/septem for a study guide on this theme.

“**Growing in the Body**” is an article from Lutheran Partners by Karen Matthias-Long about the recurring theme of integrating youth ministry into the life of the congregation, making authentic connections between all ages and stages of life. Copies available from the resource center.

Recurring themes in current youth ministry are faith formation, faith practices and “soul-tending.” Among the resources mentioned most often as primary and foundational are the following:

The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster. (B 3032) If you read nothing else, this primer is a lively and practical guide that can help shape transformational youth ministry. It reaffirms the premise that the relationships shared by youth with families, mentors, and the whole congregation are the “holy ground” of authentic youth ministry.



The Book of Uncommon Prayer by Steven Case (PR753) Combined with the CD of the same title, this resource contains worship ideas for many occasions and is “energy laden and reverent.”

When Kumbaya is Not Enough by Dean Borgman (B 3062) This book will help youth ministers develop a practical theology that engages young people.

Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People by Dorothy Bass (B2220) explores twelve central Christian practices that form the basis for most of the books described here. An excellent study guide is an additional resource.

Soul Tending: Life -Forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster (B 3182) expands on the themes in *Godbearing Life*, offering practical ways to study spiritual disciplines. The goal of this approach is that Christ will be formed in each participant and that in relationships, there will be authentic encounters with God.

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton (B 3185) is a groundbreaking, foundational study about youth and religion.

Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church also by Kenda Creasy Dean (B 3031) is about relocating youth ministry in practical theology. Dean has been called the “liveliest theologian of youth culture” today and her framework is faith practices that come out of the historic practices of the Christian community.

Family-Based Youth Ministry by Mark DeVries (B 2336) is about family-based discipling and shaping youth ministry as an integral part of the whole congregation. DeVries also is the author of a bible study by e-mail subscription called “Spice Rack.” (www.familybasedmy.com)



Frogs Without Legs Can't Hear by David Anderson and Paul Hill (B 2856) focuses on nurturing disciples at home and in the congregation.

Youth Ministry in Small Churches by Rick Chromey (PR282) A practical collection of ideas to help volunteers, pastors, and youth ministers in small churches.

Effective Youth Ministry by Rollie Martinson (B 739) presents a congregational approach to youth ministry.

These resources . . . draw us away from our rootless preoccupation with techniques and paradigms, uncovering our attempts to use our ministry to hide from intimacy with God and pointing us first and foremost to the passionate embrace of Jesus Christ. –Mark DeVries about *The Godbearing Life*

FAITH PRACTICES

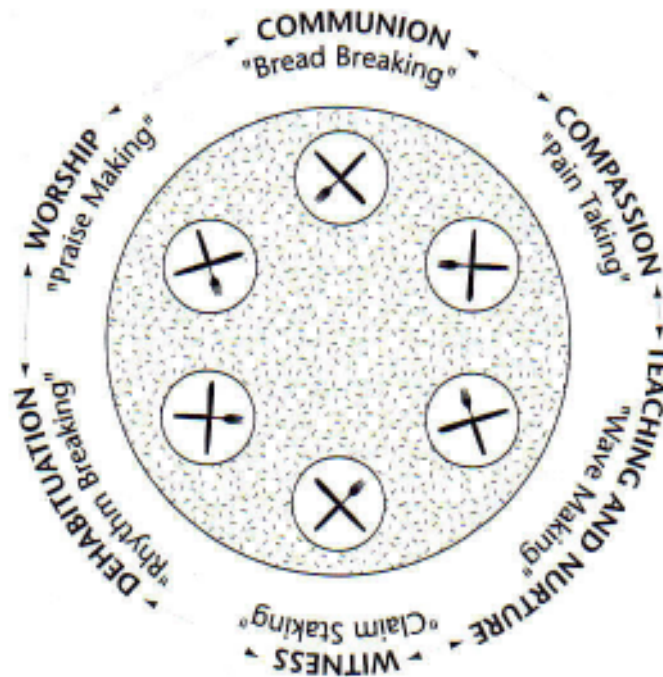
Many of the resources recommended here are about “Christian practices” or faith practices. The following definitions, charts, and list are borrowed with permission from *The Godbearing Life* by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster.

What is a “practice”?

“Practices are the constitutive acts of a community that both identify us as, and form us into, people who belong to that community. Christian practices mark us as and make us into Jesus’ followers. Our salvation comes by grace through faith, not through practice—but Christian practices are means of grace by which God strengthens individuals and the church to live faithfully.” (From *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* copyright 1998 by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster. Used by permission of Upper Room Books, 800-972-0433, www.upperroom.org/bookstore.)

FAMILIES OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

Families of Christian Practices



SOME EXAMPLES OF FAITH PRACTICES

Baptism	Contemplation	Justice	Simplicity
Eucharist	Covenanting	Keeping Sabbath	Speaking truth in love
Almsgiving	Discernment	Ordination	Spiritual direction
Catechesis	Dying well	Praise	Spiritual friendship
Chastity	Evangelization	Preaching	Spiritual resistance
Christian conference	Forgiveness	Reconciliation	Stewardship
Christian marriage	Healing	Repentance	Stillness
Confession	Hospitality and care	Searching scripture	Supplication
Confirmation	Intercession	Self-denial	Testimony
			Thanksgiving

STUDIES

Journey to Adulthood from LeaderResources is a complete youth ministry program of spiritual formation for 6th through 12th grades. It uses bible study, prayer, rites of passage, outreach ministries and both serious and playful activities to underscore its core messages all of which are sacramentally focused. Congregations subscribe to this resource. Details can be found at www.leaderresources.org/j2a_youth

Reel to Real is a series of discussion guides for helping viewers create learning opportunities around current and classic movies. (PR667, 668, 669) A similar resource is available on the ELCA website. New downloadable resources at www.ileadyouth.com

Ignite! Sparking Biblical Curiosity is an Augsburg Fortress study designed to take both leader and learner on a journey of faith through serious and in-depth study. (PR941=) Titles include:

- Biblical Texts that Stand in Tension
- Biblical Texts that Shock and Appall
- Biblical Texts about War and Peace
- How Lutherans Read the Bible
- Biblical Texts on Sex

Blessing New Voices: Prayers of Young People and Worship Resources for Youth Ministry by Maren Tirabassi (B2611) is a medley of worship resources by young people on topics including anorexia, new relationships, suicide, teenage motherhood, and more.

Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens edited by Dorothy Bass and Don Richter (B2891) is a collection of essays (that could be used as a study) by youth about faith practices that have been meaningful for them.



Additional studies are listed below under **Websites** and **Video/DVD/CD** resources.

*God said to Abraham, go kill me a son.
Abraham said, Man, you must be puttin' me on!*

-Bob Dylan, "Highway 61"

WEBSITES

www.elca.org/youth Among many other resources listed here, you'll find Faith Lens, a weekly bible study.

www.faithlink.blogs.com/rich Rich Melheim's blog for high school youth ministry

www.elcaymnet.org Connect with youth ministry leaders, events, opportunities.

www.youthfamilyinstitute.com This fine collection for youth and family issues includes a mini-resource center available for congregations.

www.faithfactors.com Creative ideas for effective youth ministry

www.exemplarym.com Youth ministry expert, Rollie Martinson, shares examples here of exemplary models for youth ministry.

www.congregationalresources.org Youth resources recommended by the Alban Institute

www.youthworkers.net Links to a plethora of youth resources from the National Network of Youth Ministries

www.wartburgseminary.edu/cym Wartburg Seminary's Center for Youth Ministry

www.formingfaith.com Helpful ideas for middle school aged youth

www.search-institute.org A site dealing with "raising caring and responsible children and teenagers"

www.faithkeepers.com This baptism-centered youth site helps connect youth with parents and baptismal sponsors

www.familybasedym.com Resources for integrating youth ministry with the extended congregational family

www.ymarchitects.com Resources from Mark DeVries about family-based ministry



VIDEO/DVD/CD RESOURCES

Our online catalog features a large collection of resources for youth. Go to www.eandsynod.org for books, videos, dvds, cds, and more.

An Insider's View of Jesus This comprehensive print/video curriculum turns 12 skits into meaningful lessons for youth. Based on gospel stories, each segment challenges youth to encounter Jesus and what it means to be a disciple. (VT 2489)

Empowering Steward Leaders is an introduction for middle school-aged youth introducing them to a life of balanced financial stewardship. (DVD89)

Youth Ministry: Developing a Congregational Approach with Roland Martinson (VT 339)

Spiritual But Not Religious: Reaching Lost Generations by Roland Martinson (C284) Six tape series about understanding mission among 19-30 year olds.

Word on the Street: 14 Scenes from the Scrapbook of Life These discussion starting video segments include topics like great leaders, poverty, God, big city/small town issues, and more. (VT 2536)

Peer Ministry Emphasizes peer ministry as a conceptual model of youth and family ministry. (VT 2465)

A bible study series by Ted and Lee and Mike Yaconelli includes:

- **Vocation! Vocation! Vocation!** (DVD82)
- **Don't Sit on Your Stuff** (DVD81)
- **Bridge to Forgiveness** (DVD80)
- **The Kingdom is Big Enough for You** (DVD79)

Bible Study Series for Youth Each of the three volumes in this series contains six brief discussion starters about issues like sexuality, peer pressure, friendship, popularity, drugs, family and parents. (DVD76=)

Never lose a holy curiosity. - Albert Einstein