

Office of Youth Ministry Newsletter

April 2009



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Introduction

It's spring! It's Lent. The weather is beautiful, albeit a bit surprising at times. Isn't that how our lives are? Isn't that how ministry with and for youth is more often than not? In keeping with this reflection, I thought I'd shake things up a bit with the design and layout of the newsletter this month. Let's call it the "color and squares" issue. I hope you enjoy it. And don't forget I'm always looking for personal stories, testimony, resources, and content. Send it my way and I'll try to get it into the next issue.

Lenten Prayer

Wearing sackcloth and ashes I come before Your Heavenly throne with a heart so heavily burdened with sins I need to atone.

Forgive my transgressions when I couldn't find time to pray, when my life seemed too hectic this simple request to obey.

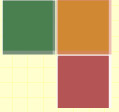
Forgive my transgressions for my bible is gathering dust, I speak of Your Merciful Promises, yet, my heart is filled with lust.

Forgive my transgressions the times when I might have been more compassionate, and more loving, to those I 'perceived' had sinned.

Forgive my transgressions remove the beam from my eye, make of my life; just a mirror of my Savior~~~crucified.

By Karen 2-3-09

Lesson: A Mixed Bag



In the epilogue of Thomas Merton's "autobiography of faith," *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton spends several pages sorting out the relationship between contemplation and action. There he offers a classic definition of contemplation: "Contemplation means rest, suspension of activity, withdrawal into the mysterious inner solitude in which the soul is absorbed in the immense and fruitful silence of God and learns something of the secret of His perfections less by seeing than by fruitive love."

But, he says, "to stop here would be to fall short of perfection." What also needs to happen is the pouring out of that love into action. All are called, Merton says, to live what tradition calls the "mixed" life of contemplation and action, "to become fused into one spirit with Christ in the furnace of contemplation and then go forth and cast upon the earth the same fire which Christ wills to see enkindled."

For us to hear and respond to that call in the midst of our "mixed" life of trying to live our faith in a world of constant activity, demands, noise, exhaustion, and occasional craziness, the "mix" of contemplation and action might be just what we need to negotiate our way anchored in God. We can do that by taking some time for contemplation and resting in God, certainly, and also by doing our work and being in our relationships prayerfully, with an awareness of God's holy presence. I'm reminded of something Abbot Stanley Gumula of Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery in South Carolina, said to novice Dismas Warner, who had asked him how he prayed when working: "I try not to be doing my own will. I try to keep my mind on the job, and not to talk too much while doing it."

-Joel Schorn, *editor and STEP facilitator living in Chicago*

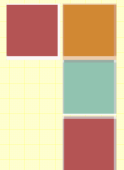


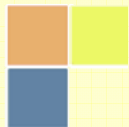
Class: Youth Ministry 101

Youth Ministry 101 will be offered on STEP (Notre Dame's online courses) this June (Jun 8- Jul 10, 2009). This course, authored by experienced youth ministers, is designed to help youth ministers understand and advocate for the importance of their ministry in the church. This course will unpack the 1997 U.S. Bishops' document regarding youth ministry, "Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry." It will explore both the practical and theoretical applications of this document for parish life. It will enhance your ministry and get you discussing and sharing with other youth ministers.

Click here for a [Full Course Description](#) and here [To Register](#).

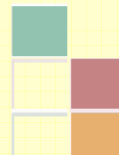
The **Office of Youth Ministry will gladly pay for** or help pay for your course if you and your parish are unable to cover the costs (\$69 since we're an affiliated diocese). Last year 12 youth ministers from our diocese took this course together and it was a great success!





God-given desire for connection

By Heidi Schlumpf – March 6 Issue of NCR



After my husband and I adopted our son, FedEx and UPS visited regularly with gifts from friends and family. One day a package arrived all the way from Australia. Inside was a personalized original piece of artwork by my artist friend Marianne. I would have loved to drop by or give her a call to thank her for it. Except that I have never met Marianne IRL (in real life). Marianne and I met through our blogs. Hers about her artwork, mine about knitting [...] In the two years I have been blogging, I have "met" dozens of women I now consider friends. We share not only knitting patterns but also parenting advice and prayers for myriad intentions. The only thing we don't share is the same physical space.

In the Internet's early days, critics--many of them church folks--assumed that online relationships were, at best, second-rate. At worst, they could be dangerous, luring people into fake intimacy with disingenuous strangers far away and tempting them to ignore relationships with people sitting right next to them. You know, real people.

But Marianne is a real person. So is Laura, whose son lived in the same orphanage in Vietnam as ours. We met through an international adoption listserv and have corresponded via e-mail and on the phone during the long adoption process. She lives in Tennessee, while I'm in Illinois. We hope to meet in person some day.

Sometimes cyber-relationships evolve into real-life ones. Almost everyone knows a married couple who met online. And sometimes real-life friendships turn into online ones, when friends move across the state, country or world. Or online communication supplements real-life relationships, helping friends who live nearby keep in touch more often than is possible with in-person visits or phone conversations.

Even the surprisingly technology-savvy Pope Benedict XVI (who reportedly has an iPod) has jumped on the online bandwagon with [his own video blog](#) on YouTube. In January, Benedict released a message praising the Internet for the opportunities it gives us to satisfy our God-given desire for connection. "Young people, in particular, have grasped the enormous capacity of the new media to foster connectedness, communication and understanding between individuals and communities, and they are turning to them as means of communicating with existing friends, of meeting new friends, of forming communities and networks, of seeking information and news, and of sharing ideas and opinions," the pope writes in "New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship." But Benedict also warns of the possibility of shallow cyber-friends trivializing the true experience of friendship or of online obsessions interfering in real-life relationships.

He's right: There are dangers to social media. Some people, myself included, spend too much of our day tapping on our computers. And many younger people clearly misunderstand the term "friend" if they think everyone who extends a "friend request" via MySpace or Facebook is worthy. Finally, without the nonverbal cues of an in-person interaction, the possibility for misunderstanding increases. Emoticons just don't suffice.

One of the advantages of online relationships, however, is the diversity of the people you meet. My craft and adoption friendships span continents as well as the entire political and faith spectrums. My friend Heidi in Colorado is Mormon, Michelle in Oklahoma is a conservative evangelical Christian, and a few would consider themselves agnostics. But it's obvious that real community has been created when you see the generosity of online friends who rally to support one another—psychologically, spiritually and materially—when someone is in need, whether because of personal or natural disaster.

I've witnessed this in the Catholic online community recently in response to the untimely deaths of two bloggers. In December Emilie Lemmons, columnist for the Minneapolis/St. Paul archdiocesan newspaper, mother of two young boys under 3 and longtime blogger, announced that the cancer she had been fighting for a year and a half was incurable. She died Christmas Eve.

I knew Emilie in real life. Six years ago we roomed together on a trip to the former Yugoslavia for young Catholic journalists. We had since kept in touch via e-mail and through our blogs. Hers--[lemmondrops.blogspot.com](#)--was about marriage, motherhood, life and eventually cancer. When her husband posted the news of her death along with a quote she wanted shared with her blog readers, more than 350 people commented with condolences.

In early February, popular Catholic blogger and author Amy Welborn posted the news that her husband Michael Dubruiel, also a Catholic writer and blogger, had collapsed at the gym that morning and died. He was 50. Amy admits that she is processing her grief by writing--both on her blog and more privately on her Facebook page. Again, hundreds of readers and lurkers wrote with condolences, memories of Dubruiel and promises of prayers. Some may find it hard to imagine such intimacy with someone you've never physically seen. But isn't that the kind of relationship all of us have with our God? Real doesn't have to be real life.



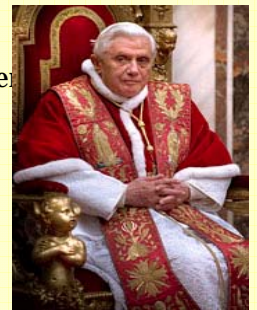
Lenten Reflections

Benedicts on Fasting

While the Pope had quite a bit to say about the value of fasting, especially during Lent, let me begin with the wisdom of Saint Benedict and the Rule: “*Enjoy Fasting.*” Fasting is as important as ever and it is a “therapy” to heal obstacles to conforming to God’s will, said Benedict XVI, in his Lenten message for 2009.

The Pontiff observed, “fasting seems to have lost something of its spiritual meaning, and has taken on, in a culture characterized by the search for material well-being, a therapeutic value for the care of one’s body. Fasting certainly brings benefits to physical well-being, but for believers, it is, in the first place, a ‘therapy’ to heal all that prevents them from conformity to the will of God.”

<http://www.webalice.it/stefanospaziani/PapaF8.htm> Finally, in addition to the penance of fasting, the Holy Father said, the penance also helps to foster solidarity. “Voluntary fasting enables us to grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who bends low and goes to the help of his suffering brother,” he said. “By freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger.”



“From what I have said thus far,” the Bishop of Rome affirmed, “it seems abundantly clear that fasting represents an important ascetical practice, a spiritual arm to do battle against every possible disordered attachment to ourselves.” [Watch his 3 minute video.](#)

In an article in *Spirituality and Health*, January/February, 2009, Clair McPherson reflects on the genius of Benedictine monasteries to awaken us to contemplation. She offers this reflection on Saint Benedict’s admonition to “Enjoy Fasting.”

Medical science is beginning to appreciate the positive value of the occasional, or regular, fast. It really does cleanse the body; it really does give the system a rest; it really is, as the Eastern sages have always known, good for you. It may have to do with evolution. Our bodies are programmed by nature or conditioned by cons of hunter-gatherer subsistence to do without food for substantial periods of time. Benedict’s wisdom is to love fasting; do not



The Blemish (an end to a prayer by Saint Thomas Aquinas)

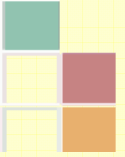
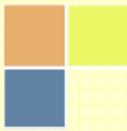
And this time God said, “There is a hideous blemish on my body, though it is such an infinitesimal part of my being. Could you kiss that if it were revealed?”

“I will try, Lord, I will try.”

And then God said, “That blemish is all the hatred and cruelty in this world.”

To whom do we need to extend a sign of peace?
What blemish of social injustice can we kiss?





The Other Side...

Paraphrased/Condensed from
Virtual Friendship and the New Narcissism
By Christine Rosen
The New Atlantis; Summer 2007
To read the entire 14 page article [Click Here](#)

Mankind has always marked its existence and development throughout time; from rock paintings to erecting monuments and other architectural wonders. Many rulers demonstrated their importance and status by printing coins with their image, or by having a sculpture or portrait made of them. In many cases, these depict not only how that person was, but also how he/she wished to be seen. These tangible anthropologies were permanent reminders of how he/she wished to be remembered.

Today, a person's legacy can be noted digitally in an every changing and interactive way. Social networking sites provide a means for the common person to leave a mark in history (however temporary this may be). Websites like MySpace and Facebook contain modern self-portraits which consist of carefully chosen and manipulated pictures, ongoing journaling, and personal information. They're unique to each individual and customizable, thereby appealing to the human's desire for attention.

In order to gain the level of attention someone desires, they often turn to developing what psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton termed their "protean self." This alter-ego intentionally misrepresents ones self for mockery, irony, absurdity or humor. According to a study by the University of Dayton, "23 percent [of students] said they intentionally misrepresented themselves [on Facebook] to be funny or as a joke."

In an effort to stand out from the crowd, people often turn to a plethora of crude and vulgar forms of self-expression. Some of the most frequently downloaded or linked-to personalizations are not fit for children (or even a Catholic adult, for that matter). As each person tries harder and harder to find a niche and get noticed, the Internet has turned into "an overwhelmingly dull sea of monotonous uniqueness, of conventional individuality, of distinctive sameness."

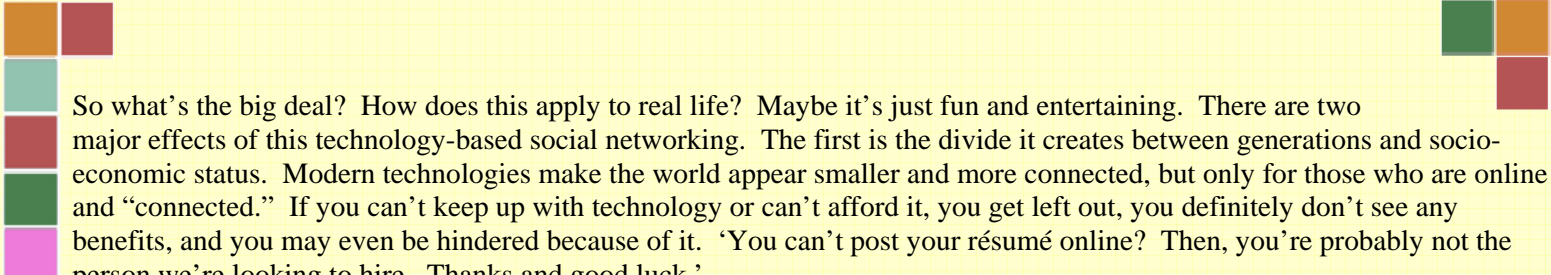
This form of self-articulation is not only public, but instantaneous. "When one's darker side finds expression in a virtual space, privacy becomes more difficult and...private misbehavior becomes public exhibitionism." Take for example, the fiancée who after breaking off his engagement changed his online status from "engaged" to "single." The spouse-to-be was most troubled with the fact that everyone found out instantly with no face-to-face interaction and no explanation other than a broken heart emoticon.

Finally, along with instantaneous attention, social networking sites also promote superficiality. Let's face it, how close can your 859 friends really be to you? Sure, they can look online and see what your favorite movie is...but wait; isn't that a different movie than last week? People's online personalities are manipulated and ever changing. Furthermore, real and true friendships "require more time [and energy] than a poor busy many can usually command." New technology allows us to not only pick our friends, but it allows us to choose *when* and *to what extent* they are our friends. There is little or no commitment or effort necessary to make or maintain relationships.

Social networking sites usually refer to this as "managing" friendships. As quickly as you can click a button, a friendship can be added, elevated, or altogether eliminated. This favors more frequent interaction, but of a lesser quality than a traditional "real life" relationship. "It is surely no coincidence, then, that the activities social networking sites promote are precisely the ones weak ties foster, like rumor-mongering, gossip, finding people, and tracking the ever-shifting movements of popular culture and fad."

Continued on next page...






So what's the big deal? How does this apply to real life? Maybe it's just fun and entertaining. There are two major effects of this technology-based social networking. The first is the divide it creates between generations and socio-economic status. Modern technologies make the world appear smaller and more connected, but only for those who are online and "connected." If you can't keep up with technology or can't afford it, you get left out, you definitely don't see any benefits, and you may even be hindered because of it. 'You can't post your résumé online? Then, you're probably not the person we're looking to hire. Thanks and good luck.'

Research has found: the more time a person spends on virtual social networking sites, the less connected they feel to the "real life" community in which they live. Are people spending less time actually living life and more time worrying about how they are perceived in life?

End paraphrase, begin Catholic reflection questions...

If people have actually lived for months on end, shopping online and never leaving the confines of their home, are they actually living the life they are called to live? What ever became of getting your hands dirty to follow Christ? What would Jesus' MySpace page look like? Would you be His friend? Would He be yours? What are the considerations for a Catholic looking to make his/her presence on a social networking site? Pros? Cons?



Young Adult Adventure Retreat

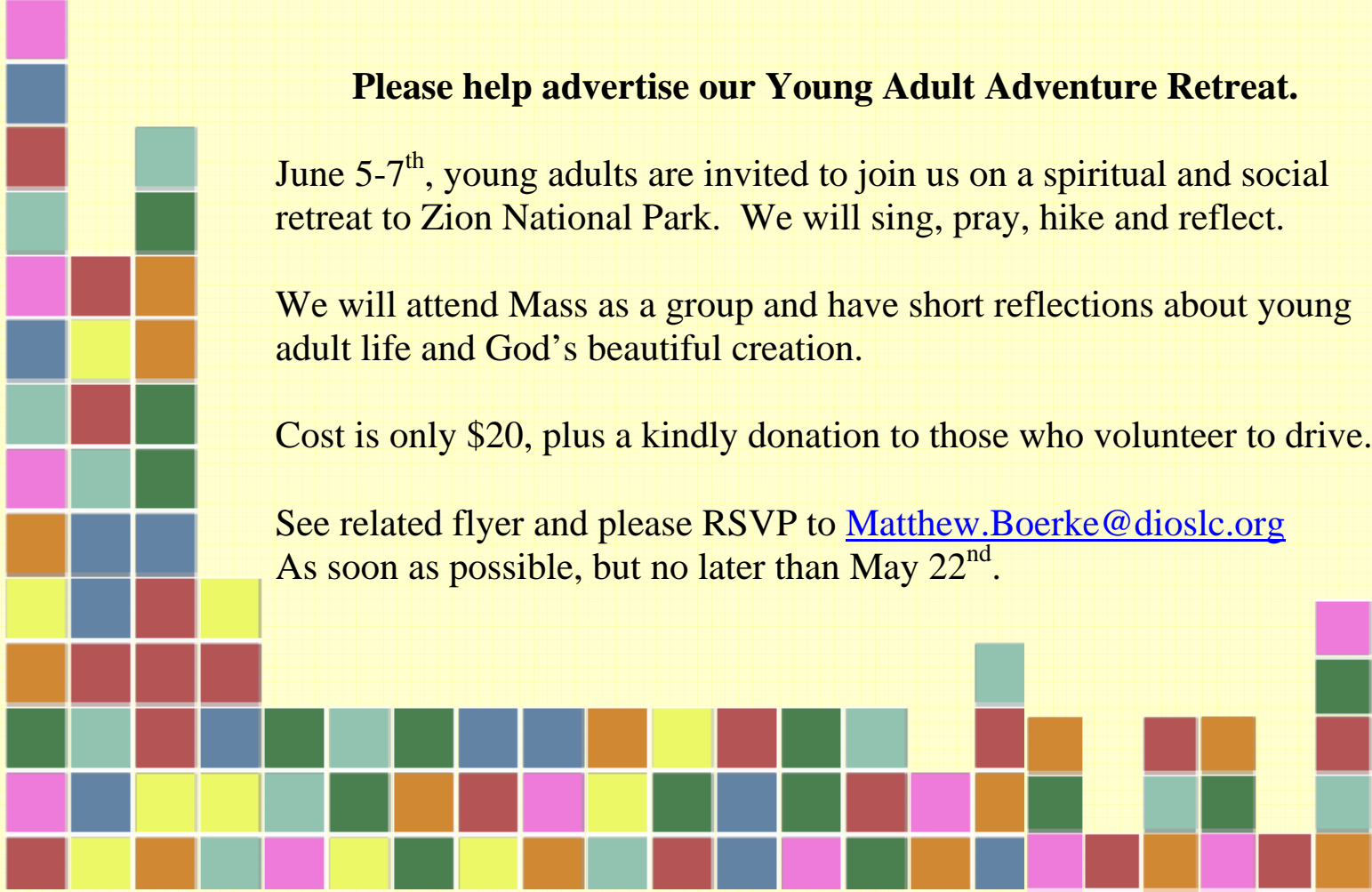
Please help advertise our Young Adult Adventure Retreat.

June 5-7th, young adults are invited to join us on a spiritual and social retreat to Zion National Park. We will sing, pray, hike and reflect.

We will attend Mass as a group and have short reflections about young adult life and God's beautiful creation.

Cost is only \$20, plus a kindly donation to those who volunteer to drive.

See related flyer and please RSVP to Matthew.Boerke@dioslc.org
As soon as possible, but no later than May 22nd.



A Few Funnies...

and Some Roll-on-your-tummies.

The elderly priest, speaking to the younger priest, said, "You had a good idea to replace the first four pews with plush bucket theater seats. It worked like a charm. The front of the church always fills first now."

The young priest nodded, and the old priest continued, "And you told me adding a little more beat to the music would bring young people back to church, so I supported you when you brought in that rock 'n' roll guitar music. Now our services are consistently packed to the balcony."

"Thank you, Father," answered the young priest. "I am pleased that you are open to the new ideas of youth."

"All of these ideas have been well and good," said the elderly priest, "But I'm afraid you've gone too far with the drive-thru confessional."

"But, Father," protested the young priest, "My confessions have nearly doubled since I began that!"

"Yes," replied the elderly priest, "And I appreciate that. But the flashing neon sign, 'Toot 'n Tell or Go to Hell' can NOT stay on the church roof."

Bob, a Catholic youth minister, got home from the church at his usual hour of 5 p.m., only to discover that it had not been one of his wife's better days. Nothing he said or did seemed to be right.

By 8 p.m. things had not changed, so Bob suggested he go outside, pretend he had just gotten home, and start all over again. His wife agreed.

So Bob went outside, came back in and, with a big smile, announced, "Honey, I'm home!"

She replied sharply, "And just where have you been? It's after eight o'clock!"

These are more motivational...



for when you need a pick-me-up:

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the [Sound of Music!](#) If your group is going to do something like this; I want in. Life can be a musical when full of Christ's love for others.

[Meet Logan](#), at young boy who can teach us all a lot about the meaning of life.

[The Last Lecture](#): A professor gives what may be his last lecture as he struggles with cancer. At 76 minutes running time, it may still be well worth watching, but I have yet to do so myself. It comes highly recommended...as noted by the millions of downloads.



Y-Min Training Opps.



Title: Ministry With Millennial Teens (Free!)

Date: Thursday, April 30, 2009

Time: 1:00 PM (MST)

Length: 1 Hour Online Workshop

Presenter: Frank Mercadante, Executive Director of Cultivation Ministries, has trained thousands of youth ministers in over eighty dioceses internationally. He is the author of several books, including *Growing Teen Disciples* and *Positively Dangerous* (St. Mary's Press).



To Register [Click Here](#)

No matter what resource or approach your parish is taking for children's, youth, adult, family, or intergenerational catechesis, this website will work with it to achieve lifelong faith formation for your faith community!

Take a few minutes and check it out:

<http://www.FashioningFaith.org>
formerly (weavingfaith.org)

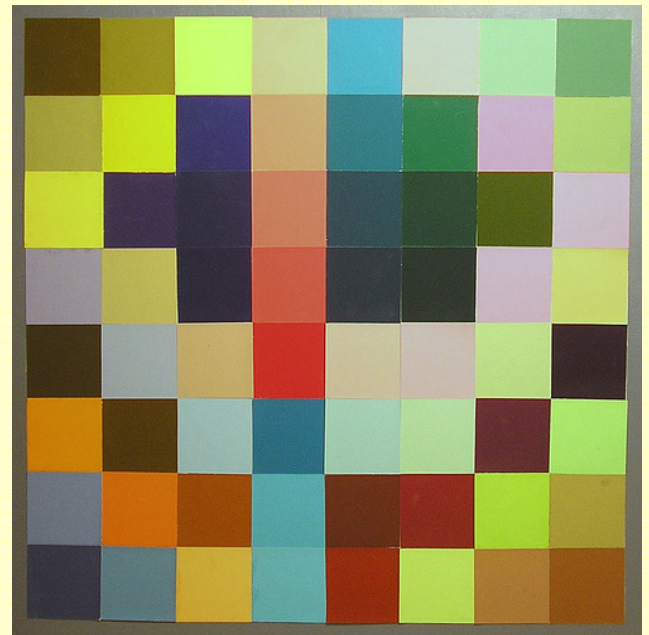
The website will become "subscriber only" on April 16th, 2009.

Important note: If you are already a subscriber to www.generationsofffaith.org your subscription will be transferred to the new site and you will still have access to the generations site until all the files are ported over.

Join Us For a Webinar Tour
Live tour of Fashioning Faith!
Thursday, May 14, 2009
10:00 AM - 11:00 PM CDT

Space is limited.

[Click Here](#) to Reserve your Webinar seat!



**Theology of the Body for Teens is now
on EWTN, Thursday evening at 9:30 PM MST**

About Theology of the Body for Teens

Theology of the Body for Teens presents the two hottest topics on the planet--God and sex--and "marries" them through Pope John Paul II's compelling vision for love and life.

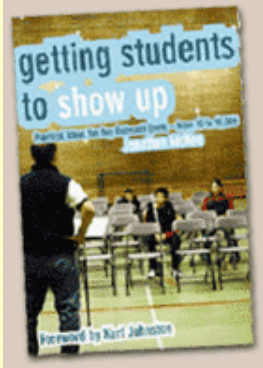
Using a great mix of stories, real-life examples, activities, prayers, and references to the culture that teens understand, *Theology of the Body for Teens* answers the questions teens have about their own bodies, issues on sexual morality, and how they were uniquely created for greatness. [Click here](#) to learn more about *Theology of the Body for Teens*.



Mark J. Sanchez, parishioner at Saint Ambrose Parish has a foosball table he is willing to give away to a needy youth ministry program. He only asks for a "donation receipt."

Sorry, it's been claimed!

Contact him at alwaysatexan320@hotmail.com or 801-856-2753.



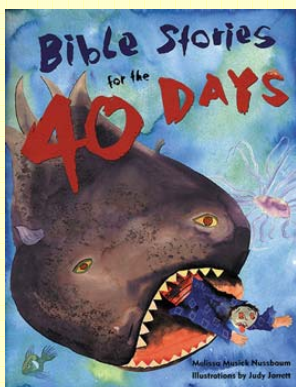
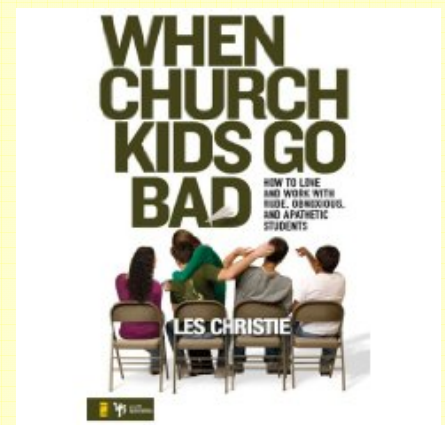
"Getting Students to Show Up" will challenge you to rethink your methodology when it comes to outreach. But more than that, it'll show you, step-by-step, how to plan and execute a great outreach event for 10 or even 10,000 students. Whether you're going for a city-wide shindig or a weekly gathering for your church or a campus, you'll find plenty of tips and tools inside that will ensure your event actually reaches out to your demographic and points them toward Jesus. **I have 5 copies available.**



Free Resources



You may have an amazing program and be well connected to your students, but that doesn't always guarantee a problem-free ministry. Discipline problems and apathetic students can drive you out of youth ministry (or out of your mind!). But you don't have to let that happen. Learn how to take a positive approach to discipline in this practical book from a youth ministry veteran, and keep the chaos to a minimum. I have 5 copies available for free.



This book contains a wonderfully told story from the Bible for each day of Lent. Parents and teachers can read this book with very young children; older children will make it their own. Stories from both the Old and New Testaments bring to life characters we all need to know, from Adam and Eve and the Noahs to patriarchs, matriarchs, liberators, judges and prophets.

It's for younger children. I will also throw in a free Lenten "Advent" Calendar :)

Diocesan Events

May 2nd:

Encuentro Pasqual de Juvenil
At Saint Francis Xavier
Cost is \$5, all day event!

May 16th:

Religious Education Spring Focus Day
Contact Susan.Northway@dioslc.org

May 17th:

Young Adult Mass and BBQ
At Saint Patrick Parish
4PM-free

June 5-7th:

Young Adult Adventure Retreat
To Zion National Park
Cost is \$20, plus a donation to drivers for gas.

June 11th:

3:30-8:00PM
Interfaith Service Project
For Junior High and High School Students
Begins at The Cathedral of the Madeleine
and ends at International Peace Gardens.

June 19-21st:

Diocesan Youth Leadership Weekend
At USU in Logan
Cost is \$150, including meals, hotel, and materials

July 24-26th:

Our FIRST EVER Catholic Family Camp
At Camp Tuttle
Cost is \$30 per person

July 26-31st:

Junior High Catholic Summer Camp
At Camp Tuttle
Cost is \$230 per student (grades 7-9th)

August 2-5th:

Elementary Catholic Summer Camp
At Camp Tuttle
Cost is \$175 per student (grades 4-6th)

August 7-9th:

Family Camp for Catholic Scouters
Contact Pam Grant at (801) 261-3106

Most of these events have flyers and information in Attachments. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to register. I appreciate your help in getting the word out to our parishes and people!

A couple more thought provoking and discussion starting videos for you and your youth:

How is your self Control? Can you resist...[The Marshmallow?](#)

What are the pressures of teen life? How can your teens cope? How can you help them cope?
View Lifehouse's [Everything Skit](#).



A decorative border of colorful circles in various colors (red, blue, yellow, purple, green, orange) surrounds the text. The circles are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some circles having a white center and others being solid colors.

Youth Leadership Training Opportunities

**Diocesan Youth Leadership Weekend
June 19-21st
At Utah State University
Cost is \$150 per person**

High school students and their chaperones are invited to attend a weekend leadership conference. DYLW is held at Utah State University from June 19-21st. Participants will learn leadership skills and practice communication and team building in a fun environment which promotes socializing and networking with other youth leaders from around the diocese. Registration is \$150 per person and includes all food, lodging, and materials. Get your youth leadership team together and contact me at 801-328-8641 or Matthew.Boerke@dioslc.org to register.

**Utah Youth Leadership Summit
June 16-19th
At Weber State university
I think the cost is \$500
for a team of 5 youth and adult leader**

Visit [their website](#) for more information.

Feedback Requested

Saint Mary of the Assumption in Park City wishes to host a benefit event.

Initial thoughts are to host a talent show.

Individuals and groups will be invited to enter.

All spectators will bring a canned good as an entrance fee.

The winning groups and individuals will “divide the canned good spoils” to take back to their parish or non-profit of choice.

This is only one idea. We are soliciting feedback on:

- **Who is interested in participating?**
- **What type of event should we host?**
- **Where should this event take place?**
- **When should the event take place; month, day, time?**

Please Respond with your thoughts and interest.



RSVP Requested:

Long overdue, it's time we had another Youth Minister Meet and Greet (and Eat). As usual, I'll present some information and training opportunities, we'll talk about upcoming events, we'll network with each other, and we'll just plain have good old fashioned, Catholic fun!

Join us at
David's Kitchen (Chinese food)
3317 South State
Salt Lake City, UT

Thursday, May 28th
6-8 PM

Please RSVP as soon as possible, but no later than May 21st.