

ZION'S CHRISTIAN YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

theParentLinkSM

May 2009



Keep the End Goal in Mind

Life with little ones can leave parents in day-to-day survival mode. Calendars and to-do lists are essential for navigating countless appointments, chores, school activities, work obligations, and more.

Your immediate goals might range from potty-training a toddler to planning your summer schedules. But what's your ultimate goal as parents? Are you merely trying to prepare kids for adulthood?



While children's earthly future is definitely important, our main focus must be children's eternal future. It can be hard to keep that in mind with each day's pressures and obligations. But what really matters is making sure our children spend eternity with Jesus. To do that:

Develop a strategy. Partner with your church's Christian youth and family ministry team to ensure that your children get age-appropriate Christian education at every stage. Reinforce that education at home by using the weekly "Family Time and

Prayer" found in the announcements of the church bulletin. Use the church library to check out age appropriate devotionals, story books and videos.

Make sure everyone's on the same page. Talk to your spouse, family members, baptismal sponsors and your children's caregivers about what's most important to you, even if you think they already know. You may want to write each of them a letter outlining your spiritual wishes for your children.

Choose intentionally. Arrange your calendar around your big-picture goal. If activities start to interfere with what's really important, re-evaluate and re-work your family's schedule. Remember special spiritual milestones, such as baptism birthdays are just as important as birthday parties. When faith becomes the top priority for your family, it also will become the top priority for your children.

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To help you keep a proper perspective about earthly and heavenly things.
2. To guide your efforts to raise children who love him.
3. To grow and nurture your children's faith and lead them to salvation.

ELEMENTARY YOUTH

May 3rd: 8:30am worship service 3rd graders lead the congregation in "The Lord's Prayer."

May 17th: Last Day of Sunday School! Students will rotate through each classroom for 10 minutes. Don't forget to thank the Godly Play volunteers.

July 29 – August 1st: Habitat at Zion emphasis week. Please register today for a week of rewarding fun!

OpenTheBook

**"I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will give me on the day of his return."
2 Timothy 4:7-8**

The "prize" of heaven waiting for faithful Christians far surpasses any earthly goal we could ever achieve. Help children get to know Jesus with these simple activities.

Teachable Moments

- 1. Start with Jesus.** Each weekday, begin your morning with Jesus. As a family, pray together before you get out of bed, at breakfast or in the car on the way to school.
- 2. Apply it to life.** After Sunday school, ask your children not only about what they learned but also how they can put the lessons into practice. Remember to take the bulletin announcements home and use the "Family Time and Prayer" or the FaithAlive! Journal pages to dig deeper into the lesson and God's word.
- 3. Celebrate expressions of faith.** Remember special spiritual milestones, such as baptism birthdays. Give kids age-appropriate Bibles so they can continue growing in their relationship with Jesus.
- 4. Create a poster journal.** Write categories such as: "Thank you, God, for..." "Help me, God, with..." and "God, please bless..." Hang the poster in a central place like the kitchen or hallway so all family members can write on it throughout the week. On the weekend, talk about the entries. Keep a Bible handy for reference.

FaithAlive!

Our FaithAlive! students have taken a walk through the Bible this year and as the year comes to a close we will be finishing up with the books of Hebrews and Revelation.

Mark your calendars!

May 17th: FaithAlive! Breakfast in the FaithAlive! House and the last day of class.
May 17th: Confirmation Dinner and Worship (7th graders serve!).
May 31st: Confirmation Sunday – Confirmation will be at the 11:00 service.
Following the Confirmation Service there will be a reception in the fellowship hall. Please join us for cake and fellowship!



Please pray our Zion Lutheran Church youth as they Affirm their Baptism on May 31st.

Family Experience: Faith-Builders

Use these fun ideas to help children understand what it means to be a Christian. Afterward, use the Bible references to tie the activities to God's Word.

• **Repentance Run (Mark 1:14-15)**—Have children line up. On "go," have them run in one direction. Every time you yell "repent," kids have to turn on a dime and go the other way. Afterward, explain that "repent" means to turn from going our own way and go Christ's way instead.

• **Follow the Leader (Matthew 4:18-20)**—For younger children, play a game of Follow the Leader to help them understand that once people become Christians, Jesus wants us to follow and imitate him by how we live.

• **Lights On! (Acts 26:18)**—Turn out all the lights in a room and talk with children about what it's like to be in the darkness. Then turn on the lights and discuss what it's like to be in the light. Make connections between this experience and becoming a member of God's kingdom of light. Then share ideas about how we can be "lights" for other people.



Teenagers and jobs – a good fit?

Getting that first part-time job is an important teenage milestone. And today's kids are working more than ever. Young people ages 15 to 17 work an average of 17 hours a week during the school year. But unlike previous generations of teenagers who had to contribute to the family income, most of today's young workers engage in "luxury employment," meaning they're the chief beneficiaries.

Kids' #1 reason for working, research shows, is to support a materialistic lifestyle.

Experts warn that overworked teenagers get stressed out, let schoolwork and friendships slide, and have less of the "down time" necessary for personal growth. In other words, kids' earnings don't make up for what they're losing.

Of course, part-time jobs have advantages, too. Work experience teaches teenagers responsibility and important life skills. Jobs, especially during the summer, offer extended opportunities to explore interests and expand on classroom education. Kids learn to manage their time, deal with supervisors and the public, and budget their earnings.

If your teenagers are itching to work, give it a trial-run this summer. Keep their interests in mind as you search together for safe, appropriate jobs. Then touch base frequently to see how everything's going. Above all, reinforce the fact that young people's main job is to get a good education—so they're not earning minimum wage for long. Read on for ideas about "supervising" the young employees in your household.

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Begin a conversation with your teenagers about their thoughts and attitudes toward work. Use these questions to get started:

1. Do you think you're ready for a part-time job? If so, how many hours a week are appropriate, and why?
2. What are the main reasons you want to work? Do you feel like you *have* to work? Why or why not?
3. What kinds of part-time jobs do you think you'd be best at, and why?
4. What rewards do you expect from a job? Would you work for free? Why or why not?
5. How can people tell if they're working too much? Do you think you'll fall into this trap? Why or why not?

Senior High News

Sunday School for May: Begins with two weeks of discussion on the question, "What do you believe about Jesus?" Pastor Shaw will be joining the class. The last class, May 17th, is "Clinging to Joy," a look at Philippians.



Looking for rewarding service work this summer?

Be a part of Zion's summer mission work with Habitat for Humanity. Zion's emphasis week to work on site is July 29th-August 1st. There are Saturdays each month, too, if that works better for your schedule. Check out the CYFM bulletin board in the hallway outside the Fellowship Hall.

Don't miss this exciting opportunity!
You'll be a part of changing someone's life...and your own!



ZION'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Class of 2009

June 7th will be an important day for the graduating senior high youth at Zion. They will be recognized at second service and embraced by their church family as they reach a big milestone in their lives, and prepare for the next step. The seniors and their families are invited to be a part of this celebration.

Please call Debbie Boyce at the church office if you have any questions.

What's Up With Kids

Today's teenagers are busier than ever, with packed schedules that mirror those of their parents. When it comes to maintaining a work-play balance, what kind of role model are you? Work is important, but so is knowing when to take a break from it. Scripture is filled with reminders to "be still," rest from our work, and focus on God's presence.

At SimplyYouthMinistry.com, Youth Pastor Kurt Johnston shares these reflections about working—and not working:

"My Pastor, Rick Warren, likes to say, 'He who burns the candle at both ends isn't as bright as he thinks he is.' Right now, it feels like my candle is burning on both ends and in the middle!... I'm not the poster-child for balanced living, but I'm re-committing to giving it my best effort. Maybe you should, too.

All of us are busy, and most of us are busy doing really good things. As we head into summer, I would suggest that it's a good time for all of us to evaluate how we spend our time, what we allow as priorities and the pace we've set for our lives. When was the last time you slept in on a Saturday? When was the last time you and your spouse watched an old movie on TV? Have you gone for a bike ride with your kids lately? Can you remember the last time you actually wasted a day? I think it's time for me to get busy; and it may be for you as well. Time for us to get busy doing nothing!"

Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers who are a part of our middle and senior high school ministries!



Important dates at Zion Lutheran Church:

- ✝ May 3rd: **Third graders honored** at the 8:30 am worship service. They will be leading the congregation in "The Lord's Prayer."
- ✝ May 17th: **Last Day of Sunday School!**
- ✝ May 17th: **Evening worship and potluck** for confirmation students.
- ✝ May 31st: **Confirmation Sunday** at 11:00 am.
- ✝ **Coming June 7th**: The Senior High graduating class of 2009 will be recognized during worship at 10:00 am and then with a cake and dessert reception following second service.

