



Something to Start With

Coffee Mugs and Youth Ministry

The Youth Newsletter of the Iowa Annual Conference
2301 Rittenhouse Street
Des Moines, IA 50321
Phone: 515-974-8912
Fax: 515-974-8962
deedee.sobotka@iaumc.org

I collect coffee mugs. Well, that's not exactly true. I never set out to collect coffee mugs. I just somehow reached the point where I *have* a lot of coffee mugs and I seldom throw any away. I guess that makes me a collector.

I was considering my coffee mug collection this morning as I was having a conversation with a youth worker about youth ministry resources. This was one of several recent conversations I've had along the same general lines. The question is often some form of - "Can you recommend a good curriculum, event, publication, website, work trip location, or camp." I think it was more than just the recurring theme of the same question, posed in a slightly different way, that caused my mind to wander to - coffee mugs.

I've got a lot of coffee mugs on my shelves, but if someone were to ask me, "Can you loan me your *best* coffee mug?" or "Can I borrow one of your *good* coffee mugs?" I wouldn't know how to respond. I use all of them - some more regularly than others. But, I don't have a *best* mug. And, I don't think I know the definition of a *good* one. Sometimes I grab the biggest one or the one with the boldest colors. Other times, I reach for the one that simply seems to fit my grip best. Occasionally I look for the one that I know will retain heat the longest, but often I'm drawn to the one that just somehow fits my mood for day. Each one is unique. Each one can be beneficial. Each has some distinction. But none of them is *best*.

Can you recommend a good youth curriculum, event, publication, website, work trip location, or camp? That depends on what you're looking for. It depends on how you will be using it. It depends on what your expectations for it will be. And, it depends on how it fits into the other aspects of your ministry. Each program is unique. Many can be beneficial. But I don't know the criteria for the *best* one. So instead, let me suggest two characteristics. Two characteristics of choosing coffee mugs - and you can make the analogy to youth ministry.

In order to make it into my collection, a coffee mug ought to fulfill the basic purpose of being... a coffee mug. It has to hold hot coffee and keep it relatively hot. It can't leak. It has to have a handle so I don't get burned. It can't be a tea cup or a water glass. That's pretty basic. It has to do what I need it to do. You can make the connection to youth ministry. If your youth program attends the same event each year, uses the same curriculum, or goes to same work trip location, but it doesn't seem to impact your ministry in any real way - youth aren't relaying an experience that takes them deeper or stretches them further in their faith - then perhaps it's not doing what you need it to do.

Second, coffee mugs in my collection have to fit my theology, ideology, or worldview. That may sound a little too idealistic for a coffee mug collection, but it's really not. Most of my mugs have a slogan, a company logo, or an institutional insignia imprinted on them. I don't have coffee mugs from places where I can't agree with their philosophy. I'm not in the advertising business. And yet, I know of churches who will use the curriculum that the church down the street had success with or attend an event that offers the biggest band or the splashiest program without asking the most basic question of - "Does this promote the values, theology and worldview that our church claims to live out? Does this program serve as an integral part of what we are trying to accomplish or does it work at cross purposes to what we want to be and do as a faith community?"

A *good* coffee mug, I think, is one that fulfills the task that I need it to fulfill in a way that is true to who I am and true to who I am longing to become. *Good* Youth Resources ought to be the same.

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The Iowa College Access Network (ICAN)



The Iowa College Access Network (ICAN) helps individuals attain their educational and career goals. ICAN provides free information and support to a diverse population of students and their families as they plan, apply, pay for and succeed in college.

ICAN also exists to improve access to and success in postsecondary education for disadvantaged, minority and first-generation students. ICAN does this by: supporting a network of state and local college access programs that provide counseling, advice and financial assistance; sharing best practices among the network; providing leadership and technical assistance; and helping establish new college access programs.

The services provided by ICAN are available regardless of whether or not the student borrows through an Iowa Student Loan participating lender and they are free!

To find out more about ICAN go to www.icansucceed.org.

District Youth Coordinators

Central District -	Alice Burress alice@jordancreek.com (515) 277-8825
East Central District -	Wayne Crull wccrull@msn.com (319) 848-9028 (319) 361-6438
North Central District -	Vacant
South Central District -	Bob Morris centralumap@iowatelecom.net (641) 672-2564
North East District -	Steve Braudt waterloodcym@aol.com (641) 939-7446
South East District -	(vacant)
North West District -	Steve Swenson swensg@yahoo.com 712-758-3680
South West District -	Lauri Greenlee lauri@metc.net (641) 322-5167 (614) 322-5180
Conference Youth Coordinator	Maria Wiblin mdwiblin@earthlink.net (319) 887-5553



Souper Bowl Nets \$9 Million Offering

United Methodist youth teamed up on Super Bowl Sunday with young people across the U.S. to raise more than \$9 Million in goods and dollars to fight hunger and poverty through the 2008 Souper Bowl of Caring. More than 13,600 churches, schools and businesses participated in this year's campaign, including about 2,200 United Methodist Youth, said Caroline Stephens, director of church relations for the nonprofit Souper Bowl organization. United Methodist collections total about \$830,000 so far this year.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Youth Strike for Christ 09'
February 6-8, 2009

YSFC will be back in Des Moines, Iowa

Keynote Speaker - Bob Stromberg

Praise and Worship Band - Remedy Drive

For more information visit www.youthstrike.com

Graduation Gift Idea

If you have graduating senior high youth who next Fall will be attending one of the Iowa United Methodist related colleges (Morningside, Cornell, Iowa Wesleyan, Simpson) or one of the state universities or colleges with a United Methodist Campus Ministry/Wesley Foundation (Iowa State, University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa or Drake) take the opportunity before Summer arrives to pass along their school contact information to help them make a transition to campus and a United Methodist campus ministry. Go to the [Youth and Young Adult](#) section of the conference website and click on the "Campus Ministry Information" or "College Information" request form along the left side margin



Youth Strike for Christ 2008 My Change, Thy Mission!

Youth Strike for Christ – an Iowa Conference event for 7th through 12th grade youth – decided prior to this year's event to help support one of the Iowa Conference area service agencies. From this idea "**My Change, Thy Mission**" was created. The Youth Strike for Christ team believes a vital part of our Christian life is serving others and supporting those who are in mission. Each church youth group attending the event was provided with a list of missions across Iowa and challenged to collect change and bring it with them to the event. The church youth group who raised the most money per person attending the event was able to pick which mission all the money would be given to.

"**My Change, Thy Mission**" raised \$1321.35 from all the church youth groups who attended YSFC 2008. We had a tie between two churches for the most money raised. Kalona UMC and Palo UMC each raised exactly the same amount of money per person. The two groups then got together and decided to give the money to **Hillcrest Family Services**. Hillcrest Family Services seeks to enhance the lives of children, families, and adults in need by teaching skills and providing information and resources which help clients make healthy life choices. They work to provide a broad range services including youth rehab, mental illness programs, family empowerment, and vocational training among other services.

Youth Strike for Christ '09 is scheduled for February 6-8, 2009!



Kelly Croy, chalk artist, drawing a picture at Youth Strike for Christ 2008