

*May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown,
our daughters like corner pillars, cut for the building of a palace.
Psalm 144:12*

Plants Full Grown

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference youth leaders

January 2010

Dear Youth Leaders,

Recently I have been thinking about why we read the Bible. The Bible is God's story, detailing the many ways God has reached out to people in grace to bring healing and wholeness. As we allow these stories to shape our values and behaviors, we become agents of God's healing and hope to the world.

So, I've decided to renew my commitment to read at least a small portion of scripture every day. I can think of a number of appealing ways to do this. For one, I enjoy the simplicity of the daily scripture readings that go with the Adult Bible Study Sunday School curriculum. Also, the prayer book, *Take Our Moments and Our Days*, includes two scripture passages for every morning and evening. Or, I could choose a passage of scripture to memorize. I could choose a book of the Bible and read a little every day. I could use a reading guide that allows me check off chapters and books as I complete them, so I can track my progress.

We are formed as disciples when we put ourselves into the places and spaces where God can shape us: reading the Bible, going to worship, even leading youth group! As youth leaders, when you make yourself available to the transforming presence of God, your youth will then be shaped by being with you.

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you as you relate to the youth in your lives. You are a gift to them, offered to them by their loving Father—one of the many ways God is reaching out to them in grace.

Shana

Bible reading guides for youth and adults: Just tell me how many you want!



Here's an idea: In January, challenge your kids to read the Bible and track their progress. I will send you a **Bible reading guide for every youth and sponsor—all you need to do is help the group to track their progress.** The guide (pictured at left) is a pamphlet that allows the reader to check off the books and chapters of the Bible as they read them. Just call or email me and tell me how many you need.

Get together with another youth group

Wouldn't it be fun to have every youth group get together with at least one other youth group between now and Youth Escape 2010? One of our conference priorities is to build relationships

between our member congregations. At West Union, the kids are always excited about getting together with another youth group.

I've attached a list of all the sponsors in your region to make it easy to contact another group. **When you get together with another group, drop me a quick email to tell me which group you invited and what you did together.** I'll keep track of these and together we'll see how many groups we can get to participate!

Youth Escape 2010 details

Making new friends, tubing on the lake, worship with a great band—these were some of the highlights kids mentioned after Youth Escape 2008. For 2010, we are committed to keeping the best of 2008 and adding more great features. In addition to inspiring worship and opportunities to connect with other Christians, we want to find ways to involve kids in leadership and send groups home with tools for living the Way of Jesus. We invite your group to pray with us for Youth Escape—for the right speaker, for the planning committee and for the participants who will come. And make sure it's on your group's calendar!

Looking for curriculum?

Have you used *Thermostat* yet? This is a fantastic resource: DVD clips followed by easy-to-follow discussion guides and activities. Created by Mennonite Central Committee, Central Plains will provide one to every congregation that requests it. [Take a closer look by clicking here.](#) (If the link doesn't work, go to www.mccstore.org and search for Thermostat.)

Insights on youth and spirituality

Wouldn't it be interesting to study the religious lives of American youth? Well, one researcher has, and you can read a short article about it here. How does religion influence youth? Just how much influence do parents and churches have on adolescents? You might be surprised! Read about it here: http://www.themenonite.org/issues/12-18/articles/Nurturing_the_faith_of_Mennonite_youth

When you have questions...

When you need a resource, ideas or advice, please call or email me! I'd love to hear from you! shana@netins.net or 319-646-2842.

Upcoming Events

Swan Lake Senior High Retreat Friday through Sunday, February 19-21

Youth Escape 2010 Friday through Sunday, July 31-August 2

Plants Full Grown is published the fourth Friday of each month for Central Plains youth leaders. Please include items from this newsletter in your church bulletins and newsletters.

Find archived issues at www.centralplainsmc.org.

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Central Plains Mennonite Conference leads congregations as they proclaim and become a sign of God's reconciling work in the world.

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