



tips for youth workers

JANUARY 2007

WE ARE THE MESSAGE!

A famous Canadian, Marshall McLuhan, coined the phrase “the medium is the message”. It is not only the information that is important, but the vehicle of communication as well.

Communication is big business. Cell phone companies, internet service providers are doing very well. We who work with children and youth are not surprised that television and radio usage is down, and that text messaging, internet and video game usage are up.

Children and youth ministry workers are in the “business” of communication. It may be structured (formal activities and programs) or informal (conversations in the van, at the rink, at Tim’s – these are often remembered and have powerful significance for young people).

Our communication is verbal and non-verbal. St. Francis told his followers, to go into the village and preach, and if necessary use words (It worked 900 years ago and it still works today).

We stand in the gap. We are there to interpret, to point, to question, to challenge, to encourage, to listen, to be present. We live the “good news”, we are to children and youth “God with skin on”, the only Bible some will ever read.

We don’t do this in our strength, and if you do friends, you’re going to get fried quickly. We take time to listen to God, to read his word, (however that works for you – there are lots of personality types, and lots of ways to learn). Only as we truly know him, can we make him truly known. Children and youth are watching us.

A part of the Christmas story that came alive for me this year, was when the angel said to old Zechariah that he was going to have a son (that was a miracle in itself), but that his son would go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, ***“to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*** (Luke 1:17)

We are preparing young people. We are “parenting” young people. We are humbly pointing young people to God. We are communicators, whether we like it or not, and our “business” is communication. We do it formally, informally, with words or without words.

I thank God that you are doing it, but more importantly for who you are. My prayer for 2007 is that in these days of change, you would keep close to God, and keep on giving of yourself, for the sake of the young people.

God bless you!

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