

Lutheran Church-Canada

EYE OF THE STORM

2004 National Youth Gathering

DATE: July 9-13, 2004

PLACE: University of Brandon, Manitoba

THEME VERSE: “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24

PURPOSE STATEMENT: Through the Holy Scriptures and meaningful Christian relationships, participants will experience the love of our Triune God in Jesus, leading to growth in faith and joy in service, thereby helping them integrate their faith with daily living.

THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT:

1. Acknowledge the Storms Youth Experience:

Define the storms that result from their sin and the sin of others: look at the challenges, temptations, struggles, doubts and hurts they face;
Bring youth to the **reality** of what we all face. Give them a sense of community that we all share the human condition of sin;
Help youth to examine themselves and identify personal storms;
Foreshadow our hope in Jesus, leaving them with a visual image of the cross.

2. Introduce the Youth to The Rock, who is Jesus Christ:

As we make the transition from the storms youth experience by retelling a story from thematic development #1, presenting it from God’s perspective;
A look at the storms Jesus faced (including Jesus before the incarnation): possible examples: Eden and the Fall, Incarnation, Temptation, etc. The use of story telling/drama/music. (There is no need to deal with these accounts chronologically.);
Conclude with a close look at the storm of Good Friday;
Foreshadow our hope of the resurrection, ending with a visual of the tomb with a ray of light peeking through.

3. Joy and Peace in the Now

Jesus’ resurrection means we have victory over the biggest storms of sin, death, and the devil;
That we celebrate Easter (likely in the Sunday Service) in a huge, enthusiastic way;
Why do we still deal with storms? We need to make the distinction between the ultimate storms of sin, death, and the devil that would separate us from God, and the storms in life that are the consequences of sin;
Focus is brought to the empty tomb (the rock) acknowledging that while storms exist, they can no longer destroy us (Visual idea... the Pastor could preach from on top of the tomb or he could walk around the tomb as someone builds something on top of it.).

4. Weathering the Storms

We still deal with personal storms because of sin - the reality is our spiritual lives are messy;

God gives us tools of faith, and the power to use them through the Holy Spirit: These gifts include God's Word, Prayer, Baptism, Communion, Confession/Absolution, and Believers building each other up;

Practically apply how Christians are empowered to use these tools to weather specific storms as identified in the Sermon on the Mount. These storms include bullying (5:21-26), lust (5:27-30), worry (6:25-34), judging (7:1-6), and false prophets (7:13-23);

Emphasize the unconditional forgiveness God gives as God's people continue to struggle through these storms.

5. Reaching Out to Others As They Experience Their Storms

We can be used by God to reach out to others in the midst of their storms (with the tools God gives us), even as we face storms ourselves;

Why do we bother to help others? God calls us to be salt and light. (Matthew 5:13-16);

Examine specific storms we are called to enter:

- Loving your enemies (5:38-42 - not revenge)
- Giving to the needy (6:1-4 - justice, service)
- Treasures in Heaven (6:19-24 - our own materialism);

d. Bridge this talk with the servant events.

6. Joy and Peace in the "Not Yet" (future)

Summarize and recap our thematic development up to this point;

Paint a picture of heaven - no more storms (challenges, struggles, hurts, temptations, consequences of sin);

Celebrate;

Go home!