

Help Each Young Person

Develop a Resilient Identity in Christ



- Resilient youth identify with the life and mission of the Christian church and seek to serve others.
- Resilient youth remain humbly confident in their faith in the face of crisis and transition.
- Resilient youth can build relationships with those different than themselves and navigate disagreements in a humble, loving way.
- Resilient youth are lifelong learners who face doubt and challenge by turning to God's Word.

Like a tree deeply rooted, youth who understand their Baptismal faith have a strong base from which to grow as Lutheran Christians in this world. But every tree is tested from time to time. Resiliency is the quality that allows for an individual to bounce back and adapt when faced with stress, adversity, or tragedy. Resilient Christians can navigate all the challenges, transitions, and struggles in our world while maintaining their identity in Christ. When struggles, doubts and questions rise, healthy youth ministry firmly roots youth in Christ, helping them to return to the Means of Grace as they face challenges.

Resilient youth identify with the life and mission of the Christian church and seek to serve others. Their faith is not private or exclusively for Sunday mornings. Instead, they recognize that their faith in Jesus Christ connects them with their congregations, a larger church body, and the whole Christian church. Youth can be emboldened to share truth in love, serve others, and treat people with compassion, as love was first shown to them in Christ.

Resilient youth show humble confidence. Humble confidence means youth recognize their sin, acknowledge their need for forgiveness, and look for the good gifts of God for us.

Their confidence comes from their gift of faith as they trust God's promises and reflect God's love to others. Challenges may come unexpectedly or as a part of transitions like changing relationships, graduation, entering the workforce, and more. In these critical times, supportive adults and parents model humble confidence by listening well, empathizing, encouraging confession and absolution, and prayer. The Holy Spirit works to orient young people back to Scripture and continues to engage them in the life of the congregation. In these moments, it is important Christian adults prepare and ensure that their own posture or judgement pulls toward, not pushes away, a young person from faith.

Resilient youth can build relationships with those different than themselves and navigate disagreements in a humble, loving way. In our divisive, sinful world they are inevitably going to come across opposition to their faith. Through the Holy Spirit, resilient youth navigate disagreements in a way that fosters relationships while pointing to the truth of the Gospel. As they explore our world, they can listen carefully, ask good questions, and share both Law and Gospel with confidence. Resilient youth can embrace the diversity of our world, appreciate the breadth of God's family, and embrace others in the name of Christ.

Resilient youth are lifelong learners who face doubt and challenge by turning to God's Word. We love to teach young people well, but there will always be something new to learn. The world, sin, and the Devil will continually seek to throw doubt and challenge at us. Resilient youth are lifelong learners who face these forces by turning to God's living and active Word. In each age and life circumstance, the simple message of God's love and forgiveness given to us through Jesus needs to be on their minds and lips.

Youth ministry connects young people to the Word of God as they are on the frontline of a changing world. God's promises in Baptism can provide a much-needed anchor when circumstances, thoughts and feelings fail to bring comfort. Parents and supportive adults can actively equip young people and walk with them to ensure they stay deeply rooted in their identity in Christ. By God's grace, resilient Christians take the questions, new ideas, and struggles back through the filter of their Baptismal faith and truth known in God's Word.

Discussion Questions

For Individuals

- How can you remind teens of God's promises to them in times of crisis and transition?
- When have you experienced resistance in sharing the Gospel? How can that experience help as an example (good or bad) for teens?
- How have you seen the church handle disagreements well? Not so well? How can God use those moments to build resilient teens?

For Youth Ministry Teams

- How does your youth ministry prepare youth to be humbly confident?
- How are you as supportive adults helping them prepare for the trials of life, including life-altering situations or crisis? How can God use youth ministry to anchor youth to God's promises in their Baptism?
- List some of the transitions youth and young adults are going through. How can a congregation resource and prepare young people for these transitions, especially for those which regularly happen like the beginning college or career life?

For Congregational Leadership

- How do youth see humble confidence in adults, especially leaders, in their church?
- How are your leaders and members examples of life-long learners who face doubt and challenge by turning to God's Word?
- How are you connecting to local colleges? How are you helping to connect your students with local congregation and campus ministries?