



**“It’s the mission trip that lasts
for more than a week.”**

I love the mission trip. The reason we do mission trips is the hope that youth will come home and live a daily practice with an attitude of service. But often the mission trip only lasts a week. Kids add it to their resume and the memories fade into a phrase, often saying, “That was a fun trip.”

Peer Ministry equips kids with skills to live daily out the messages of the Good Samaritan story. It takes kids biggest concern, their friendships, and helps them recognize that every relationship is a part of caring and welcoming ministry.

To build that everyday, everywhere, every relationship attitude and practice of service, contact us to let us help you get started.



**“Youth Group?
OR,
Youth Ministry?”**

There is a huge difference! *Youth Group* faces inward. It is the forming of a club, which is mostly about itself. *Youth Ministry* faces outward. Youth gather to support each other while being equipped with ministry skills and an attitude to care for friends, families and the world. Youth Ministry gathers with a sense of mission and purpose.

Peer Ministry is the foundational, relational equipping tool needed. If you are only doing youth group, than it is time to begin a ministry that is about everyday, everywhere, every relationship.



**“Everyday,
Everywhere,
Every Relationship
Ministry.”**

“I don’t know if this counts, but... ,” she began.

I was asking a beginning Peer Ministry group how and where they were using Peer Ministry skills. Everyone hesitated, obviously never considering them selves in ministry. She went on to tell about going out Friday night with a friend she had not seen much of recently. She knew her friend’s parents were separated and probably going to divorce. She thought it would be good to talk, listen, and spend some time being a friend.

Kids are already doing vital vibrant ministry everyday. We just forgot to tell them it counts! Peer Ministry equips youth with the skills and attitude to live a ministry everyday, everywhere, in the midst of every relationship that does count.



Changing The Scorecard for Ministry

“D@#\$\$%! Soccer”

“* & ^ % \$ Dance Line”

“^ & * (# Marching Band”

“! @ # \$ % Football, basketball, hockey, debate, and let’s not forget the chess team or whatever else is getting in the way kids showing up for the programs. It is the lament heard everyday by youth ministers all across the country.

But... *What if* we recognized that the soccer team, dance line, marching band and chess team are exactly where kids are called to do ministry? What if congregation’s primary focus became that of equipping and supporting kids to live a vibrant life of faith everyday, everywhere, in the midst of every relationship?

What if, when busy kids can’t always be at our programs we called them to ask...

“How is your ministry going?”

“How have you been using your skills this week?”

“What are the issues that you are most concerned about?”

“What support or resources or people can I guide you to?”

“What can I pray for you this week?”

We train you, to train your kids, to live a life of ministry.



The Pastors Partners

A Lead Pastor at a large congregation trains 6 to 9 high school kids in Peer Ministry who become the Pastor's ministry partners. Yes, they help with some program planning, but bigger than that they become the Pastor's advisors, and consultants, keeping the pastor posted on kids culture and concerns. They give prayer requests, sermon illustrations and ideas for Sunday morning, even participating as worship leaders. The Pastor asks each week via a private FaceBook group, "How is your ministry going in the midst of your relationships?" "Who and for what can we pray about this week?" When a new member or hospital visit is needed, and a young person is involved, the Pastor always takes a Peer Minister with.

What is happening now? After eight years of this, this Pastor is seeing kids grow up to become camp counselors, Youth & Family Ministers, active volunteers and yes, even Pastors.

Peer Ministry is not just about "*Youth Group*." It is the way Pastors support, uplift and equip kids for living a dynamic, vibrant faith.



**It is Not a Job.
It is an Attitude**

These words first appeared on the front and back of a t-shirt created by a Peer Ministry group. They got it! Their leadership was not about programs. Their leadership was about living a welcoming and caring attitude. It is the habitual practice of recognizing and responding to the hurts and needs of those around them. As a result of their faith the Good the Samaritan story became a living, fulfilling story. These Peer Ministers created an atmosphere with an attitude that was magnetic for others.

Maybe your youth ministry needs that magnetic draw, experienced best when kids have a caring and welcoming attitude intentionally learned in Peer Ministry. Don't wait for it. Create it.



Pastor Dwight Says...

To Lyle and those leading Peer Ministry,

You shape, form and equip the future of our church. There isn't, in my estimation, **anything** more important for our church today. The training of Peer Ministry is critical. The skills they learn *gifts* them with the tools to do ministry and mission to teens who all are at risk.

When we allow them to do something of substance in ministry they respond. Our Peer Ministers are positive young Christian leaders. We recognize that *youth ministry does not happen until youth are doing ministry*.

Our Peer Ministers lead our Confirmation Retreats, and they are great at it. Last Wednesday evening they created a critical mass for an event. They lead the discussions on the Senior High Mission trips. They invite and welcome their peers. After giving a talk about Peer Ministry we already have 5 new 9th graders who want to take Peer Ministry training!

Congratulations - and know you are making a huge difference for Christ - and thanks for what you have done for our ministry.

Pastor Dwight Stensgaard
 Calvary Lutheran
 Rapid City, S.D.

Is it time for you to join in on this important, critical way of doing Youth Ministry?



Christa On... Finding Purpose

Becoming a Peer Minister Leadership has completely changed my life. I would have never thought I could be of so much use to people. Just knowing that I am equipped to effectively minister to my peers is an amazing feeling. When people come to me who need help making decision, I can put the decision making model to use. I follow the steps, and help the person make the choice that is best for them.

–Christa (High School Student)



Sara On... Being Invited to Participate

Being Invited to Participate

The real honest truth on why I took Peer Ministry Leadership at my church is way beyond me. Probably a plan of God's, but at the time I felt as though I was *peer pressured* into doing it. People kept mentioning to me that I should be a part of the training, and then followed up to see if I signed up yet. Eventually I gave into what I now see as positive peer pressure and a chance to make myself a better person.

I learned so many skills that help you talk to the average person, deal with tough situations, and minister to my peers. I also learned ways to break the worldly routines that wear so many people down. It is a way to refresh and modify attitudes and find God who they can rely on. -Sara



Peer Ministers Tell The Story

I am not there to solve it for them, but to merely help them through it. –**Mallory**

It is extremely hard on a youth minister to deal with everyone's problems all at once, but now Peer Ministers are equipped with the skills to help out. Many teenagers consult their friends first because it is more comfortable for them to do so opposed to talking to an adult. As Peer Ministers we are able to relate to other's problems more than anyone else and be able to help them explore their alternatives.

–**Kari**

One of the most significant things from this training is the leadership ministry in my church and community that I am now involved in. After leading Bible studies, being a leader for youth group and other activities I seek new ways to go into the community to use my leadership skills. –**Megan**

I use what I learned not only with my friends and peers, but also with my family and one day my career. –**Nicole**

Before going through Peer Ministry training I did not handle conflict well. I had a hard time communication to other people how I was feeling and why I was upset, which usually resulted in an argument and frustration. The Peer Ministry training has taught me not to handle situations like this in a positive and constructive manner. How when I encounter conflict of any kind I am able to successfully use *I-messages* and other techniques. What I learned are successful and positive ways of mediating conflict and expressing my opinions and ideas. –**Jenny**

Before the session on *Authority Figures* I had trouble talking to my superiors and getting any results. I had always let my emotions get carried away leading straight down the path to getting nothing. After this session I learned that one cannot talk to authority figures as if they are not in a place of authority because they are. I learned not to insult their judgments and to be courteous while still standing by my own values. –**Andrew**

My family and I have started getting along better since I had Peer Ministry Training. Recently my mother and I had a disagreement. Usually that kind of thing turns into a really big fight but this time I put my Peer Ministry skills to use. I listened to what my mom was saying, and tried to understand it. Then I was able to tell her what I thought and why. We ended up compromising. It saved us some hurt feeling and we both got what we wanted. –**Christa**



Pastor Karna says...

We are so thankful for our time with Lyle. PEER Ministry training invites people to jump in -- to splash around in the waters of promise that hold our lives. We read stories from scripture that grounded us in Jesus. Lyle has a unique ability to invite people into the narrative. Suddenly stories from long ago breathe Holy Spirit life and call into our own lives and relationships. We remembered the people who made the Gospel real to us and named our gifts and how our gifts include a sense of call. So often leadership is defined as "who ever is the loudest and most charismatic." Lyle expands the definition of leadership by encouraging people to look deeply at the gifts God has given them and the gifts God has given our neighbors -- and to trust that authentic leadership and community are present wherever two or three gather. He reminded us of the ministry of listening and taught us way to listen and speak that will truly help us be the body of Christ with one another. We learned fresh new ways to pray together. Lyle teaches leadership skills founded in scripture, faith, call and love for neighbor. No wonder youth and adults from our congregation found themselves deeply touched and profoundly empowered to get out there and minister in this world God loves so much!

–Rev. Karna Baseman Stark



Julie Miller, Youth and Family Minister says...

Dear Lyle,

I wanted to write you a letter to tell you how much I enjoyed and appreciate the Peer Ministry Training. When I returned from the training my pastor asked me how it was and I told her without hesitation that it was the most effective, productive and useful continuing education I have done. Lyle was fun to listen to and work with! He is patient with his students and careful to answer all of our questions. The training was hands on and experiential which helped me to not only learn the concepts but practice them as I learned. Lyle teaches and facilitates using the techniques and strategies that he is teaching US to use when we facilitate the training with our students!

I will use the ideas, concepts and practices I learned from Lyle with my students AND with my adults. I believe that this is the most "fruit producing" training I have received. I am a better leader and the youth ministry in our congregation will be more effective because of the training I received from Lyle!

Sincerely,
Julie Miller