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## The Holidays Are Upon Us!

It usually comes the morning after Halloween, when your children are still deep inside their sugar induced comas, and you are cleaning the smashed pumpkin off of your drive way. Don't let it catch you by surprise, because if you're not careful it will.

I am of course talking about the holiday season.

For some it comes when you reach inside your mail box to find your favorite magazine with Paula Dean on the cover telling you how to fry a turkey with eight sticks of butter, and for others it will be when their in-laws call and ask whose house you will be spending Christmas day at?

No matter how it happens the truth is that it happens before you're ready for it. Let's face it, we are busy enough as it is with our social calendars and keeping up on our kids. How are we supposed to find time to purchase all the perfect gifts and keep the seasonal events straight?

Once again, here comes your Immanuel Lutheran Youth Parent Newsletter to save the day. This issue is jam pack full of the things you've come to know and love (our curriculum guide, calendar, etc), but also some spectacular seasonal lists that may make things smoother and more special for your family.

## Serving Chili and Serving Others

Last month's Spaghetti Fundraiser was a success and we thank you for all your donations. This month we would like to invite you to eat with us again and give you a chance to show us your stuff.

On Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting a Chili Cook Off for lunch after the second service. All of the sides and drinks will be provided, as well as hotdogs for the kids. What we would like from you is to bring a crock-pot full of your favorite chili to enter into our contest and for everyone to enjoy. All teens and adults will be given a vote to cast on their favorite and we will crown the King/Queen of Chili Cook Off.

We will also need some people to donate deserts. Cookies, brownies, and other pre-divided treats would be preferred. Please contact for all entries.

A few days afterward the kids will be on Thanksgiving Vacation, and we want to give them the opportunity to serve others and remind them how much they have to be thankful for.

Kim Woodruff is spearheading a visit for us to go to Catholic Charities in Mattoon on Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> to sort and hang clothes. This time of year the store gets overflowed and needs all the help they can get to go through all the donations they receive.

We will leave the church parking lot at 8:45 that morning, please have some breakfast already in your belly or in your hands, and bring some money to go out to lunch with afterwards at the original Burger King. This will be a great way to get the kids out of your hair while making those important preparations.

## Netflix: Naughty or Nice?

Netflix has changed the way our families enjoy movies and TV. For under ten dollars a month you can watch hundreds of quality programs in your home via streaming video, and now for no extra charge you can watch porn.



Yes, that's right, pornography on your televisions, blu-ray players, video game systems, iPods, and computers all at a click of a button. Let me explain. In the last few months Unrated (UR and NR) titles have been popping up in the new release section of Netflix, pretty much right next to your instant queue. Most of these nudity filled films are "uncut" versions of "teen" movies, such as the American Pie series, that try to pass under the guise of "Late Night Comedies". However your teens can find something that goes beyond soft-core if they flip over to the Foreign Film section. Be advised that while foreign films have a reputation for being racy, in this modern era of on-demand internet intercourse, racy pretty much means actual sex and not just a few scattered shots of topless actresses.

So do you need to get rid of Netflix to keep your family safe?

No, not at all. While the parental controls are a little archaic, Netflix does have a simple option that will fix you up in just a matter of minutes. Here is what you need to do:

- 1.) Log-in to Netflix on your computer.
- 2.) In the top right-hand corner click on "Your Account & Help"
- 3.) Scroll to the bottom of the page where it says "PREFERENCES" and click on the link "Change parental control setting".
- 4.) This will redirect you to a screen asking you to insert your password again, do so and you will find yourself on a page where you can make your rating choice. You can block out all of the stuff in question by selecting the option to show things with ratings R and below, but even more family friendly parameters exist.

**PARENTAL  
ADVISORY  
EXPLICIT CONTENT**

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*Remember these verses and questions are here for you to be a help in your child's spiritual growth!*

## **Parables: More than just a story**

As we wrap up our series on who Jesus was, and come to the conclusion that he was not only a revolutionary but the Son of God, it seems obvious that we should focus on his teachings.

Jesus commonly taught people in parables (short stories that illustrate a moral attitude or religious principle), and with good reason. Stories have the ability to help transport us into a new realm of understanding, and in it we get to experience truths of not only who we are but also God as well.

Over the next two months we will be covering five of Jesus' most well known and compelling parables in hopes to learn a very important truth, "What you do matters!"

### **November 6<sup>th</sup> – The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23, Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 11:28)**

*How we respond to God's word will drastically impact our daily lives.*

- 1.) Why did Jesus teach in parables?
- 2.) What kinds of things tend to "choke" our understanding?
- 3.) How does planting God's word inside us help us in daily life?

### **November 20<sup>th</sup> – The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35, Matthew 6:14)**

*How we forgive others will affect how God shows us grace.*

- 1.) What makes forgiving someone difficult for you?
- 2.) How do you think God feels about us making the same mistakes over and over again?
- 3.) Whose method of keeping score is better for you in the long run: yours or God's?

### **November 27<sup>th</sup> – The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14, Matthew 6:5-13)**

*How we pray can draw our hearts closer to God or move ourselves further from Him.*

- 1.) What says more about a person, a habit done in public or private?
- 2.) In what ways do we tend to make talking to God different than talking to family and friends?
- 3.) Besides just asking for stuff what other things are there to pray about?

### **December 4<sup>th</sup> – The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30, 1 Peter 4:10, Ester 4:14)**

*How we use our talents and treasures is important business to the Father.*

- 1.) What kind of talents do you have that are going to waste, or are being squandered for yourself?
- 2.) What kinds of opportunities have you missed out on because of a lame excuse?
- 3.) What are some things that God may have placed you for "a time such as this"?

### **December 11<sup>th</sup> – The Parable of Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31-46, Matthew 20:26-28)**

*How we treat those in need isn't easy, but has an effect long into the future.*

- 1.) What did Jesus mean when he said he came "not to be served, but to serve"?
- 2.) What kind of example does that set for us?
- 3.) Is helping others always comfortable? Does that excuse us from doing it?

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Here is a little exercise for your family as Turkey Day approaches. As you get together for your meal give thanks each day for something different. You would be surprised at the number of things you can be thankful for, and it might just encourage you to share with each other more than just once a year.

Family	Clean Drinking Water	Your Home	Having Food on Your Plate Daily	Income
	Freedom of Speech and Worship	A Safe Place to Live	Teachers & Leaders	
The Seasons & Holidays	Personal Growth	Your Church	Health	

## Christmas Gifting



With the Christmas season rapidly approaching, you are probably trying to think up some good gifts for your kids, and I'm sure that at the same time you would really like for them to be affirming. Of course after reading that last line you may ask, "But how can I find something that's not only positive but something they will actually enjoy?" That's where our Youth Holiday Gift Tip List comes in.

Below you will find a list of books and music that are not only uplifting but excellent. Many of these I can attest to being in my own personal library, and can say that even the children's books are great for older crowds getting something out of them while reading them to younger siblings and children.

I'm sure you will find these gift suggestions not only affordable but easily accessible. Check out Amazon.com for some great prices and shipping rates.

### **Francis Chan "The Big Red Tractor and the Little Village"**

This book by internationally known pastor Francis Chan is a contemporary parable sharing a timeless truth: God has a special purpose for you and you can fulfill it through the help of his Spirit. It's a powerful lesson perfectly told for little hearts. In it the villagers have a red tractor that helps them grow enough food to get them through the year, but it's hard to use and everyone has to help push and pull the tractor. Everyone believes that's just how things are, that is, until Farmer Dave discovered a long-lost book in a dusty attic. Could it really change everything?

### **Phil Vischer "47 Beavers On the Big Blue Sea"**

Written by co-creator of Veggie Tales and told in verse, this light-hearted tale will tickle the funny bone of kids and adults alike as they follow the adventures of 47 beavers stranded in a rowboat in the middle of the ocean. The story focuses on the scripture, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other." Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a (NRSV) Join the beavers as they learn that 47 are even better than two and things go best when they all work together. Make sure you purchase the version with the audio CD.

### **Ted Dekker "Circle Series"**

*The Circle* is an epic story of evil and rescue, betrayal and love, and terrorist threat unlike anything the human race has ever known. It begins when a man named Thomas Hunter who finds himself being chased down an alley after working the late shift at a coffee house. When a bullet grazes his head, he awakens in an entirely different reality. Now every time he falls asleep, he wakes up in the other reality--and every choice he makes impacts the fate of two worlds. This ground breaking series of four books will entice readers into a fantasy realm inspired by the Bible narrative, and is a definite pleaser. If you have a fan of book series (Harry Potter, Twilight, Hunger Games, etc), then consider this gift.

### **Frank Peretti "This Present Darkness"**

*This Present Darkness* is among the classic novels of the Christian thriller genre. First published in 1986, Peretti's book set a suspenseful standard in spiritual warfare story-telling that has rarely been met by his contemporaries. Set in the apparently innocent small town of Ashton, *This Present Darkness* follows a Christian preacher and newspaper reporter as they unearth a New Age plot to take over the local community and eventually the entire world, but what is behind the scenes is truly amazing as Ashton is the scene of a terrific battle between evil demons and angelic forces. This book is not for the squeamish, but for page-turning spiritual suspense, it's hard to beat.

### Switchfoot – “Vice Verses”

With seven quality studio albums, millions of album sales, and a Grammy win, Switchfoot has repeatedly proven to be a band worth listening to. There are few Christian rock bands out there that find such a strong combination of thought-provoking lyrics and excellently crafted music, let alone success in the secular realm. With an eclectic sound that draws in fans of rock weather their favorite band is U2 or Foo Fighters, *Vice Verses* (Switchfoot's 2011 album) is bound to make you see why Billboard has called them "powerful, anthemic rockers" and why they have millions of fans worldwide.

### Family Force 5 – “III”

If you have kids that are fans of the wild dance/rap/rock music known as “krunk” or “dubstep” then you want to get them into Family Force 5. The Family's third album, appropriately named "III", is overall a fun album primarily designed to get you moving and shaking. It succeeds well at that task, but the underlying bonus is that they are a clean cut group that doesn't press lyrics full of sex and substance abuse on teenagers. Get online and check out their music for yourself and you will find that it has got the same addictive beat that is already pumping through their iPod's earbuds, so you know it will be a hit.

### JJ Heller – “Deeper”

From catchy love songs, to heartfelt tunes with spiritual undertones, JJ Heller is a sing-songwriter beyond compare. You may be familiar with her song “What Love Really Means”, which got lots of airplay and in my opinion, was one of the most real songs playing on Christian radio in 2011. If you have a teenage daughter who is into girls that sing and play guitar then you should defiantly get them any of JJ's albums, but this new release in particular has more of an indie coffee house feel to it. I promise you that if you get them this CD you will even find yourself constantly hitting the play button.

### Oceans Above – “Oceans Above”

Oceans Above is a multi-artist effort, designed to produce Christian worship music with a more modern indie-pop sensibility. This album is a unique experience of music and spirituality that breathes new life into old songs, taking the Church's music into places it's never been before. With progressive stylings that sound just like hit songs from bands like Owl City and The Postal Service, it will make lovers of people who hate worship music. For anyone looking for musical excellence and a chance to hear some of your favorite old songs new, *Oceans Above* is a record you should most definitely check out

## Staying in touch on your iPod Touch



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*I'mOK is a free app for iPod Touch, iPhone, and iPad that is new to the phone market, but has plans to expand in the coming year.*

Are you getting tired of drilling your kids for information about where they are and what their up to? Wouldn't it help if they just freely offered that information? But that would never happen.... or would it?

Companies are now starting to let parents take advantage of the all-powerful technology that their kids constantly use.

I'mOK is a private family network that turns staying in touch into a game. Kids earn points for checking-in with their parents. The more information they provide (like location, photos, messages, tagging friends) the more points they get! Parents agree to redeem those points for approved rewards. In the process, the whole family becomes closer and safer!

“Our view is that what makes kids safer is communication and being close to their folks,” says the new iPhone app's co-creator Matthew Bromberg, “And I don't want to know where my kid is on the map every single moment. I just want to know what's going on.”

It's important to note however that no matter how convenient technology becomes it will never be a substitute for face to face communication.

# Immanuel Lutheran Youth Calendar

Don't lose this sheet! We want you to stay informed on all the youth happenings throughout this holiday season!

**The RUSH (High School Retreat)** – *Friday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>*. Group leaves from Baker Gym parking lot.

**Lock In (Middle School Trip)** – *Friday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>*. Group leaves from Immanuel Lutheran Church.

**Chili Fundraiser Preparation** – *Friday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>*. Kids be at the church at 4 PM to help setup for fundraiser.

**Chili Fundraiser/Tree Selection** – *Sunday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>*. Fundraiser after church & picking out church tree after lunch.

**Service Project at Catholic Charities** – *Wednesday, Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>*. Helping organize the store. Leaving church at 8:45 AM.

**Setting Up Christmas Tree** – *Sunday, Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>*. A special Youth Group for those who still aren't out of town with families.

**Santa's Night Out Fundraiser** - *Friday, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>*. Youth are babysitting at the church from 6 PM to 11 PM. Pizza provided.

**Christmas Tree Extravaganza @ Hoovers** – *Sat/Sun, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>*. Youth needed for both days (from 2 PM – 4 PM).

**Mug and Muffin Fundraiser** – *Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>*. One gender will be serving breakfast items between services. More TBA.

**Youth Progressive Christmas Party** – *Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>*. Party starts at Youth Building @ 5 PM and will be back @ 8 PM.

**Youth Outreach Event** - *Friday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>*. An event to kick off our ministry for 2011. More details TBA.

**Registration for Ski Trip Due** – *Sunday, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>*. Forms and money due.

**Sweat Night Out Fundraiser** *Friday, Feb 10th*. Youth are babysitting at the church from 6 PM to 11 PM. Pizza provided.

**Ski Trip Weekend to Wisconsin** – *Friday, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>*. More details TBA.

If you have any tools, talents, or tricks that might help us in these upcoming events please let us know.

Looking forward to a great 2011!