

# *Investing* IN

**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**



northwest conference  
developing leaders. thriving churches.

[NORTHWESTCONFERENCE.ORG](http://NORTHWESTCONFERENCE.ORG)

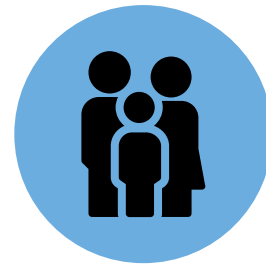


# WHY CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY IS A MINISTRY PRIORITY

The Northwest Conference is full of dedicated, passionate, capable leaders and volunteers who understand the importance of making ministry with children, youth and families a priority.

Effective ministry with children, youth and families won't happen if our ministries are full of good intentions, but poorly led. Loving Jesus and loving kids is a good place to start, but we must be intentional with our methods and deliberate with our leadership of this generation.

The goal of NWC Children, Youth & Family Ministries is to promote shared growth for children, youth and families in our churches by offering strategic training, support and resources for those serving in these ministry areas.



## WHY WE INVEST IN YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

► **Children and youth matter to God.** Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14).

► **Children and youth are more receptive to the Gospel than adults.** In the United States,

most people who make a decision to follow Christ do so before the age of 18.

► We hope to **reverse the trend** of research that shows close to 50% of young people who express faith as adolescents will walk away from faith after graduation from high school.

► **The local church is uniquely equipped** to help parents pass on faith to their children and to develop a community that supports a child's and adolescent's faith development.

“... And a little child shall lead them.” Isaiah 11:6







## ADULT LEADERS HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

The effectiveness of ministry with children, youth and families is dependent on effective local leadership—staff-driven or volunteer-based—to foster spiritual formation and growth.

When adults of all ages commit their time to sleeping on leaky air mattresses, volunteering in the nursery, traveling long distances in old church vans, and eating way too many slices of mediocre pizza just to invest in the lives of our young people, we stand in grateful awe.

We need to continue to create contexts where caring adult leaders can interact with children and adolescents and ask them the deep and challenging questions that guide them as they make decisions about their lives. We also need events like

Go:Serve, MUUUCE and camp that take children and adolescents out of their normal rhythms and challenge them to pursue Jesus wholeheartedly.

## ADULT LEADER EVENTS & RESOURCES

### CONNECTIONS

- Children & Family ministry leaders gather monthly during the school year to be encouraged, develop relationships, pray and share ideas.
- Youth ministry leaders meet monthly throughout the school year for encouragement, education and networking. Topics have included youth ministry management, counseling, storytelling, ministry with kids on the autism spectrum, dating violence prevention, and more.

### IMAGINE

- A free annual event to celebrate, develop and encourage volunteer teams serving in children and family ministry in Northwest Conference churches.

### RECHARGE

- Each January, Covenant churches from the NWC join

with 700+ other children and youth volunteers from a variety of denominations for a day of training and encouragement. The day includes powerful speakers and workshops on a variety of topics in children and youth ministry.

### SABBATH RENEWAL RETREAT

- Each spring, we offer a chance to get away and unplug for a few days at one of our camps. Anyone serving in children, youth or family ministry leadership is invited to take advantage of this opportunity to grow in their walk with God so they can lead well.

### COMMUNICATION

- Our staff produces monthly Children & Family and Youth email updates aimed to equip and inform ministry leaders in NWC churches.



- We also stay connected via social media and resources posted on the NWC website.
- The NWC has developed resources to assist churches in child safety and protection and risk management. Resources are available online or by contacting the NWC office.





## CHILDREN & FAMILY EVENTS



### GO:SERVE

Go:Serve is an opportunity for families with kids in PreK through upper elementary school to learn and grow together, in a family-friendly, yet stretching, environment suitable for younger children. Families can expect to have their worldview expanded, to be inspired by God's kingdom workforce in the world, and to have opportunity to extend the hope and love of Christ with those experiencing unmet needs.

### FIVE COVENANT CAMPS

The Northwest Conference is home to five awesome Covenant camps. Each camp offers a unique set of activities, a beautiful outdoor setting, and a caring, welcoming staff. Children, youth and families throughout the NWC participate in summer camp, family camp, weekend retreats and other life-changing camp programs.

## YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH OF TODAY, NOT JUST TOMORROW

The Northwest Conference collaborates with local churches to create events that directly impact children and youth.

We believe we are better together, and that our shared ministry creates dynamic contexts where youth and children can encounter Christ.

These events empower our students to meet others from regional Covenant churches and have access to speakers, worship teams, resources and

experiences that they might not otherwise encounter.

Over the years, the range of events has changed as we respond to the needs and desires of our churches. Some we have done for decades, such as Adventures in Leadership and MUUUCE. Other events are relatively new, such as Go:Serve

and VIVE. The Northwest Conference is constantly evaluating the effectiveness of our shared ministry events as we seek to meet the needs of our churches in the best way possible. These events are led by task forces made up of leaders from NWC churches.



# YOUTH EVENTS

## MOVE

Mission Outreach Venture and Experience (MOVE) is a weekend opportunity for senior high students (9th-12th grade) and youth leaders to have a hands-on mission experience in an urban setting. The event combines worship, education and service in a context that challenges high schoolers to think more deeply about compassion, mercy and justice.

## MUUUCE

MUUUCE stands for “The Most Unbelievable, Ultimate, Urban, Camping Experience.” This high-energy, fast-moving, multi-day event is designed to give middle schoolers and junior highers a chance to connect with Christ and their peers.

## ADVENTURES IN LEADERSHIP

Adventures in Leadership (AIL) is a weeklong intensive for select high school students that intentionally develops and strengthens

leadership skills in the rugged and beautiful setting of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

## CHIC

CHIC is a triennial event hosted by the Evangelical Covenant Church where thousands of high school students from all over the denomination gather for powerful worship, dynamic speakers, creative educational experiences, outdoor recreation and small group conversations.

## VIVE

VIVE is a college readiness program for students in grades 7 through 12. It focuses on students who are the first in their families to go to college and those who are under-resourced. It is done in collaboration with North Park University. Students and parents begin to see that their dream for a college education can become a reality through VIVE.



“There are no words adequate to describe the Holy Spirit’s power in quieting over 700 middle school students to absolute silence ... to hear the Good News of Jesus!” – NWC Pastor







# HOW THE NORTHWEST CONFERENCE CAN SERVE YOUR CHURCH

The Northwest Conference remains committed to ministry with Children, Youth & Families. Seeking to equip, resource and encourage the local church, we can partner together to pass on faith to the next generation.

Whether your church needs help with a staff transition, a risk management issue, a question about resources, or to talk through a tricky situation, we are here to serve you. The Conference staff has access to a variety of resources and people to help your church as you seek to build strong and healthy youth and children’s ministries.

To learn more about how you can prayerfully or financially support these ministry priorities, connect with others in ministry, or to learn more about the ministries listed, contact the Northwest Conference office.

***If you’d like to get involved, please contact:***

Ginny Olson,  
Director of Youth Ministry,  
[ginny@northwestconference.org](mailto:ginny@northwestconference.org)

Kara Stromberg, Director of  
Children & Family Ministry,  
[kara@northwestconference.org](mailto:kara@northwestconference.org)



## THE IMPACT OF OUR MINISTRIES



“I’d always wanted to go to college, and going to Covenant Pines growing up helped me decide where to go. My family encouraged me to go to college, but I knew we didn’t have the money to send me. Mentors at church motivated me to go to VIVE so that I could learn more about college and also get a scholarship, which has helped with the financial burden of tuition. Now I am a junior at North Park and I have a good GPA. I have been a leader around campus, including on worship teams and leading a trip to Zambia. I have been blessed and I know I wouldn’t be at this place had it not been for the resources God set in front of me.” – *Tatianna Hughlett, First Covenant, St. Paul*

“Conference events provide [a place for fellow pastors to enter into community together](#), where you can connect with people who already get where you’re at, and you don’t have to explain it. And [the NWC provides tremendous guidance and leadership](#) in church life.” – *NWC Pastor*





**northwest conference**  
developing leaders. thriving churches.

**The Northwest Conference  
of the Evangelical Covenant Church**

3106 47<sup>th</sup> Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406

(800) 756-6692 • (612) 721-4893 • [northwestconference.org](http://northwestconference.org)