

## **Inspiring Mission Today - Report from the Ev. Lydiagemeinde Dortmund / Justin Sathiskumar**

Hello, my name is Justin Sathiskumar. I am currently doing an apprenticeship as an educator and I am also doing my A-levels at the vocational college here in Dortmund. Together with other volunteers I've got the possibility to organize the youth activities in our church, the Ev. Lydia-Gemeinde. We plan youth evenings, vacation activities and youth services. The youth services are the heart of our youth work. Youth services are the heart of our youth ministry and I would like to introduce them to you in a more detailed way today.

The youth services were born out of a longing of youths and young adults for services that are up to date and inviting, so that they are gladly attended, and the youths and young adults can bring their friends. We have managed to create such a worship service. I have brought you a video of our work, which should convey a little of the feeling and atmosphere of the youth service evenings.

Video plays.

Every three months such a youth service (if the situation with Corona allows it) is prepared, designed and carried out by our volunteer team of people from different congregations. Our services encourage interaction. During the service, the visitors are invited to three to four stations to deepen the theme of the service for themselves, for example, through reflection and writing or through creativity and design. There is always half an hour for this. The themes of the stations change in each service. Through the station time, we offer everyone the freedom that he or she needs on his or her journey with God.

The visitors of our youth services are diverse: from teenagers and young adults to senior citizens. People from surrounding cities and districts of Dortmund as well as people from our neighborhood. We reach these people primarily through relational work that takes place before and after the service. Relationship work that lives from the fact that we as a team of the youth service go out and visit our visitors in their communities or in the environment where they are active, see how they live and attend their services. Above all, we stay in exchange with them. We update each other on what is going on in the different communities and invite each other. Additionally, social networks like Instagram provide a platform where we can reach or remind people. As I just said, our visitors come from very different contexts: people without church affiliation, Roman Catholic, Free Church and Protestant believers, seekers and convinced, people who have been in Germany for a few months, to people who have lived in Germany for generations. We may sweep these people into God's presence for a Saturday evening, about 1h 45min, inviting them to experience church in a new way with a theater, an interactive impulse, stations and a community action in the service. Our youth worship band designs the service with modern songs. In addition, there is always a tempting free offering that invites you to stay after the service and share with people while eating pizza. Pizza is always well received. Some people come just for the pizza. Personally, I love the thought that at some point someone tells me and says: "I got to know God in a completely new way over a slice of pizza. I brought you a quote: "I wish I could remember how wonderful it was and that I dare to come back any time, even if I usually I don't go to church!"

Such words we may read and store in our hearts as we step out of our church building. We look outside the box and invite people in. We create a suitable offer, so that we as a team in university, in school as well as in our circle of friends can invite people who are far away from church to enjoy a brilliant evening together. In the best case, they get to know church and God anew and go home strengthened by the pizza as well as the fellowship.

Thanks for listening! If there are any questions and there is time, I am happy to answer them. If not, drop me an e-mail or on Instagram. I'll post my contact info here in the chat.

Justin Sathiskumar