

Who are you wearing? Longville Salem Lutheran Youth begin T-shirt ministry

Do you read T-shirts? If you do, you are given a free insight into the person wearing it. Problem is, sometimes those T-shirts get outdated, *and fast*. Just what does one do with a Kevin Garnett T-wolves jersey or a Minnesota Twins T-shirt with SANTANA or HUNTER emblazoned on it?

We, the Longville Salem Lutheran Youth (including kids from Walker, Northland, and Pine River-Backus high schools) have a solution to that problem. We decided to create our own T-shirt, one that features the ultimate designer. It took us eight months to design the shirt, and we learned much along the way. The front of the shirt reads: 4:20 God's got your back!"

So, what's the story on 4:20? April 20th, or 4/20 has been a date intentionally or unintentionally used to invoke evil. It happens to be the birth date of Adolf Hitler. Hitler, who oversaw the extermination of six million Jews, could be considered the face of evil. Curious that some leaders currently on the world stage deny this...so together, our group watched a documentary on the daily life of prisoners held in the concentration camp at Dachau, Germany. This is the same film currently shown at Dachau's reconstructed concentration camp in many languages all day, to standing room only audiences. We found the film very revealing.

As our thinking progressed, we wondered if it was a macabre coincidence or a perversion of glorifying this birth date that the Columbine school shooting of 12 students and 1 teacher took place on April 20th, 1999?...

One of the victims that day was Cassie Bernall, who had videotaped her Christian testimony just one week before. We watched her testimony; we read and discussed her mother's book: "She said yes: the unlikely martyrdom of Cassie Bernall."

We learned that when Cassie was confronted by the killers, they asked her if she believed in God. "She paused, like she didn't know what she was going to answer, and then she said yes. She must have been scared but her voice didn't sound shaky. It was strong. Then they asked her why, though they didn't give her a chance to answer. They just blew her away." (She said yes, by Misty Bernall, Pocket Books, 1999, page 14)

Next we learned that 4/20 has been a designated time for lighting up a joint, a generic way of declaring one likes to use marijuana, or a term for the substance itself. For us, that was enough to see that the dark powers seem to revel in that day and time.

More, please read on ☺

Besides thinking through these sobering but relevant issues, we were also challenged to agree on a T-shirt design with our group that draws from three high schools. If we could agree on a design, we could be double-edged swords as the shirts would bond us a bit, as well as fulfill our mission to spread the Gospel.

We have been told that we are bright ☺ , but introverted ☹. So our leader asked if we would be willing to simply wear a T-shirt to pass on the faith. We could evangelize without saying a word? Perfect! Just be real and wear the shirt! *But what shirt?*

At our next meeting, 2 girls stepped up and said they thought that our T-shirt should have 4/20 on it. !!! Someone groaned, “oh *no!*”, but we listened as they explained they had looked up the Chapters 4, Verses 20 in every book of the Bible. Then they read their favorite, stand-alone verses aloud: it was magical- - - one amazing message after another.

They had found in God’s 4:20, the power to debunk evil with good. They took something they didn’t like in their world (school shootings, drug culture, bullying, weird Hitler glorifications) and turned it on its head.

With that, we decided to do our part to change the direction of things. While the negative message of 4:20 has spread, Salem Youth hope that their message, too, will spread. Sort of letting the world know you are hip to the message, but have made a better choice.

So we intentionally wear a T-shirt that encourages our peers to look to God. On the front, the **4:20** is written as typically Chapters and Verses are written from the Scriptures, plus a twist on a hip phrase: “**God’s got your back!**” Then, as you are directed to the back, you will find God’s Word on 4:20. Twelve tremendous, triumphant verses brought to you by the Salem Lutheran Youth Fashion Intervention Team!

Proceeds for shirt sales go to our mission trip to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in June. If you (or someone you know) are interested in taking back the day and time of 4:20 and would like to purchase a T-shirt, phone us at the church (218) 363-2011, or download an order form at

salem@arvig.net, click on youth group, and communicate your order on our link:

godsgotyourback@arvig.net.

Thank you!!!

