



The April 18 2009, "What's Up Sheet" for Leaders

for St. John's Youth Ministry Members and Their Families

All St. John's 7th to 12th Graders are Members. "Connecting YOUth to Christ through Word and Deed!"

This past week on British television, Susan Boyle a 47 year old church choir member from a town in Scotland, stunned a crowd of doubting onlookers and judges as she sang "I Dreamed a Dream" from Les Miserables.



Prior to going out on stage, she was asked how long she had been singing: "Since I was twelve." She responded. As she walked out on stage, she boldly demonstrated determination while the judges and audience began quietly demonstrating their doubt and disbelief that someone at her point in life and overall appearance would dare to come into such a competition.

Following a brief interview by the judges, she begins to sing. The reaction of the three judges begins to tell a new story: Simon's eyebrows perk up. Amanda's jaw drops. Pierce begins to cheer. Back stage, the stage crew shouts into the camera: "You didn't expect that, did you?!?!" The previously laughing audience rockets to their feet and cheers while Simon, Amanda and Pierce radiate delighted disbelief and amazed shock. Simon, who is known for being horrible to contestants radiates a sincere and gentle smile. Amanda savors the moment as if experiencing a fine wine as she unconsciously begins to guide Susan with something resembling a musical director's finger in an ascending musical scale in a very challenging section of the song. Once ascended, Judge Amanda leaps to her feet with applause.

Following the performance, Susan begins to walk off stage and is called back by the judges and stopped by the stage hands.

The judges respond:

Judge Pierce says "Without a doubt, that is the biggest surprise I have had in three years of this show... Everyone was laughing at you. No one is laughing now. That was stunning! An amazing performance! Amazing! I am reeling from shock." Judge Amanda: "I am thrilled! Everyone was against you. We were all being very cynical. This is the biggest wake up call ever. It was a complete privilege to listen to you."

In their final vote, the judges declared: "The biggest YES I have ever given anyone!" "Yes! Definitely!" "Susan Boyle, you can go back to your village with your head held high! It is three "Yeses."

An outpouring of joy flows from the audience and judges alike as Susan exits the stage. Once back stage, a stage hand says, "I think you enjoyed that just a little." Susan responds: "Incredible!"

Dates To Remember

**Sunday 19
5:30 to 7:00pm
Meet at St. John's**

**Saturday, April 25
Bus Trip to
Washington DC
To See Our
National Cathedral
and "The Mall"**



**Your
Youth Ministry Team:**

Ron & Sue Hammer,
Mary Alice Peeling,
Kathryn Matrangola,
Missy Matrangola,
Chris Battin,
And Fr. John

**The Mission of St. John's Youth Ministry is to:
Develop Trust! Explore God! Find God in each other!**

What does this have to do with youth ministry? Answer: Everything!

Susan's dream of being a professional singer began when she was twelve years old. Our ministry to youth begins when the children of our church are about 12 years old. They are idealistic and filled with dreams of who they want to be and what they want to do. Susan's choice of song, "I Dreamed a Dream," is very telling of her personal story of love hoped for and never achieved. I believe that as she sang it with such feeling, it was her personal feelings from deep inside her own heart: the miserable feeling of a dream dreamed and never experienced. It is the song of a broken heart.

Teenagers are known for being idealistic and determined in fulfilling their goals until someone, generally adults around them, begins to shoot holes in their dreams. Susan said that she had never been given the chance to fulfill her dream of being a famous singer. With her finest opportunity at hand, she walks out on stage while her audience and judges begin to smirk at her.

In youth ministry, how often do we smirk at the idealistic dreams of the teens within our ministries? For that matter, do we even know what those dreams are? We give the teens in our groups opportunities for fun and games and occasional service, all of which is fine in and of itself. Let me propose something: Let's plan a ministry that identifies the dreams of the teens within our groups and, with the resources of God's church, let us guide them into fulfillment of those dreams!

I know that if we did so, our reaction would be that of Susan's judges. Upon seeing the teens of our ministries beginning to fulfill their dreams, our eyebrows will perk up. Our jaws will drop. We will begin to cheer.

Far too often, we are guilty of what the back stage crew shouted: "You didn't expect that, did you?!?" We don't expect much of our group members and as a result, we don't see much to cheer about.

Let me further propose something: Let us stop being the equivalent of the laughing (skeptical) audience! Let's rocket to our feet and cheer! Let us radiate delight and amazement. Let us be radiant and sincere and gentle and smile as we learn more of the dreams of the teens within our group. Let us savor the moment as if experiencing a fine wine as we guide our youth into discovering their dreams and fulfilling them. We will then, like Judge Amanda, leap to our feet with applause when we see the result.

God designed youth to be people of vision and hope. Joel 2:27 tells us that God's Spirit is poured out on all people: "Sons and daughters will prophesy... and young men will dream dreams."

Let us give them the biggest surprise in years by opening the door to their dreams. Let us not laugh at their hopes. Let us be amazed at what they are capable of doing. Let us be thrilled, not cynical.

Let Susan Boyle's determination to fulfill her dreams radiate into our ministries. Let our experience in witnessing her be our biggest wake up call ever. Let us discover the greatest privilege of witnessing the fulfillment of the dreams of the youth in our church. In so doing, we will shout with great joy and thanksgiving, "YES!!! YES!!! YES!!!"