

PNEC *Sharing the Good News!*

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

Caffeine and Christ

Nancy E. Azar, Associate Conference Minister

A title such as the one I have used for this article probably sounds a bit odd. Actually Caffeine and Christ is the title of one of 4 books which make up a series called *Caffeine &*, recently published by The Pilgrim Press. This new youth resource/curriculum is written so that youth can connect issues in their lives to faith and the Bible. *Yes*, there are other resources who claim that same purpose.

BUT what makes this resource different is the unique youth friendly, accessible and very little if any prep work in which the books are written. The books use imaginative telling of Bible stories and contemporary language and experience. They are filled with great activities, not “hokey” or “shallow”, designed to be done in informal settings through conversations. The author, Steven Case, even encourages youth leaders to hold discussions with their youth groups at coffee shops or similar casual meeting places. The *Caffeine &* series stresses the importance of relationship building which is KEY in “keeping” youth interested in being part of a group.

Here is what Senior High Church School leaders Greg Dottor and Jeff Hartman of Church of The Good Shepherd, Alburtis have shared thus far with me about the *Caffeine &* series. (I asked them to “test pilot” the series with their group.)

- Like the fact that *Caffeine &* goes beyond the Gospels in the New Testament.
- The lesson plans are really well done.

- The youth liked the warm-ups where you choose a preference when in a larger group. However, with a smaller group such as 2-4 youth, they do not seem as engaged with the lesson. You really need 5-6 students to get a good conversation and that seems to be the point with *Caffeine &*.
- We have not yet planned an actual restaurant location but think that would help build excitement.
- Has the informal/dialogue style of the Talk Sheets, but a bit more to offer on the spiritual, Bible piece.
- *Caffeine &* may be a bit “Christian Lite” at times.

After reading all 4 books in the *Caffeine &* series here is my suggested sequence for use of the books:

1st – *Caffeine and Character*: This is a good introduction focusing on self exploration and community building with the group.

2nd – *Caffeine and Commitment*: Deals with personal attributes of youth and mixes in faith understanding.

3rd – *Caffeine and Confusion*: Looks at basics of the Christian faith, definitions of theological terms and the basics of other religions.

The 4th book entitled *Caffeine and Christ is good for a Lenten study and I believe a MUST for part of a Confirmation experience. It offers a comprehensive overview of the life of Christ.*

If you would like to hear more about the *Caffeine &* series feel free to contact me. To preview the books contact the PNEC Resource Center. For further information visit www.thepilgrimpress.com. I pray that you will seek out this resource, work with it and dare to engage in face to face discussions with your youth. Remember that you do not need to have all the answers or come to some great theological conclusions... just enjoy the Caffeine and Christ high!

TO CONTACT US OR TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS

431 Delaware Avenue www.pnec.org web page 610-826-3113 phone

Palmerton, PA 18071-1908

610-826-5464 fax

Alan Miller – AlanM@pnec.org

Toby Holleman – TobyH@pnec.org

Nancy Azar – NancyA@pnec.org

Beverly McClure – BeverlyM@pnec.org

Barbara Jennings – BarbaraJ@pnec.org

Patty Rehrig – PattyR@pnec.org

