The following training presentations are available for scheduling by parishes and schools in the Diocese of Helena. All presentations have been developed in collaboration with the Center for Ministry Development and are copyright protected.

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Diocese of Helena
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Understanding Youth Today

This workshop helps parish leaders understand the developmental changes that young people are experiencing during early and older adolescence and how these changes affect the type of ministry that we offer. Participants will also explore how faith changes during these adolescent years and ways that ministry can address and support these changes.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

Gathering

Think about some of the young people in your own life... children, nieces and nephews, grandchildren, and those you know through friends, Church, the neighborhood, and the community. Bring these young people to prayer today.

Leader: Gracious and loving God, you have made each age, each time of life, rich with its own struggles and rewards. Today we celebrate, in a special way, the young people in our lives and in our parish who are in that unique place of growth—of becoming more themselves. We thank you for the young people we have called to mind and celebrate the gift of them among us. We ask you to watch over them and to help us to help them on their journey. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our guide. Amen.

Listen: 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Respond: After each quotation is read, please respond together with the prayer as listed below.

Don't laugh at a youth for his affectations; he is only trying on one face after another to find his own.

Logan Pearsall Smith (1865-1946)

All: God of many faces, be with our young people as they try to find out who they are and who you are calling them to be.

Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young.

J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, 2003

All: God of all ages, help us to remember who we used to be so that we can have more compassion for the young.

In youth we learn; in age we understand.

Marie Ebner von Eschenbach

All: Master Teacher, help us to use what we have learned to be guides for young people.

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945)
All: Creator God, help us to cherish the beautiful gift that each young person is and to honor the potential that each person possesses.

The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), *The Dawn*, Sec. 297

All: God of Chaos, help us to love and honor the questioning of youth, knowing the all things come from you.

Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.

Franz Kafka (1883-1924)

All: God of Beauty, help us to always see the beauty in this world and allow the young to be our guides.

**Go Forth**

Leader: May the young teach us of enthusiasm and love.  
May we teach them of the same.  
In all times and ages we call on you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
To guide us as disciples to live in your love. Amen.
Millennials

Service-Oriented
Young people have a strong sense of the common good and of collective social and civic responsibility. They are more knowledgeable than any previous generation about social issues. They are very socially concerned about the environment, AIDS, drugs, homelessness, crime, and discrimination. They engage in service activities more than any previous generation.

Hungry for the Transcendent
Young people are spiritually hungry. While more than 80% of young people today will identify themselves as believers, the question that should be raised is, what do they believe in? They are hungry not just for answers, but more importantly, the knowledge of how to find answers for themselves. They are seeking a practical, pragmatic, everyday faith they can grasp that will help them to make sense of the world around them.

Diversity is Important
This generation values diversity unlike any before them. They have a high tolerance for differently held beliefs. They believe strongly in equal rights. More than any previous generation, they believe that immigrants are a resource to the United States and they support the rights of immigrants. Discrimination against minorities is in the top five issues about which they are very concerned.

Focus on Wealth
Getting rich is an important goal for this generation; most say that it is either their most or second most important goal.

Mediavores
This generation is addicted to media. It is not uncommon for them to be doing their homework, listening to a CD, watching television, and communicating online at the same time. Their use of technology and social networking sites is their mechanism for staying in touch with friends and family.

Love of Family
In light of all the troubles in the world in which they live, there seems to be a surprising trend toward relying more on their family as a sanctuary against the difficulties of life. They view their parents as the most important source for guidance and emotional support, and as young adults, stay in contact with their parents on a daily basis and rely on them for financial help.
**Self-Reliance**  
Young people believe that becoming successful is up to them and they are not depending on others for help. Finding a good job is a priority. They are the young navigators. They must chart their own course and captain their own ship. “It’s up to me to create my own well-being.” They value personal experience and are prone to seek out critical thinkers. They are independent, and emotionally and intellectually open. They strongly value individual rights – the right to be left alone, the right to privacy, the right to have and express their own views. They want to be treated fairly.

**Hungry to Belong**  
This generation has a strong need to identify with a place they can call home. They have a hunger for exploration but a need to be able to return to a home-base. They have the need to be acknowledged and affirmed for who they are now. They have a strong sense of loyalty to the people and places that they can relate to as their own.

**Educational Achievement**  
Youth’s main priority is to get a good education and their core value is personal competence. This generation identifies a good education as the gateway to success.

**Relationships are Paramount**  
Young people rely strongly on close personal networks of family and friends. They also have a desire to be connected to others – friends, in school, interest groups, and online virtual communities. Peers are important and are not always a “pressure.” There seems to be a significant shift in how this generation responds to peer pressure.

**Politically Involved**  
Voter turnout has increased based on this generation’s involvement in the political process. They are interested in what is happening politically and are not as cynical about the government as previous generations have been.

**Know Their Heroes**  
Young people today are much more likely than previous generations to name as heroes people known to them personally. They look to friends, family, teachers, and mentors much more than political leaders or national figures as role models.

**Hope**  
Young people today are growing up with hope. This is a significant change from the previous generation. They are not pessimistic or cynical. Rather, they are optimistic and realistic and expect to be happy adults.

Sources used:
- *Young Life Magazine,* Spring 1998.
The Changes of Young Adolescents

With the exception of infancy, no time in life compresses more physical, intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and faith development into so brief a span. The key changes during young adolescence (10 to 14/15 year-olds) involve:

Physical Development
• entering puberty and the capacity to reproduce
• being sensitive about physical changes and confused about their emerging sexuality
• incorporating their bodily changes into their own self image as male or female

Intellectual Development
• beginning to move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking
• questioning and testing adults’ statements and evaluating adults’ values
• being painfully self-conscious and critical, idealistic, argumentative, self-centered
• expanding interests

Identity Development
• requiring time to reflect upon the new reactions they receive from others and to build a consistent self-image from the different mirrors in which they see themselves
• discovering who they are as unique persons with abilities, interests, and goals
• seeking limited independence and autonomy from parents and adults

Moral Development
• engaging in more complex decision-making process
• resolving moral dilemmas in terms of the expectations of someone or something other than themselves (family, friends or what the law calls for in a given situation)

Interpersonal Development
• relying on parents and families in setting values and giving affection
• identifying more strongly with the peer group for belonging and friendships
• entering a broader social world of middle school, peer groups, and activity groups
• developing the ability to consider the feelings and needs of others in a relationship
• learning how to relate to the opposite sex (what to say and how to behave)

Faith Development
• deriving their faith from parents and family
• developing their faith and identity, establishing a set of religious beliefs, attitudes, and values through the experiences of participation and belonging in a caring faith community where they are valued
The Changes of Older Adolescents

Older adolescent growth must be seen as an ongoing process beginning around the first year of high school and culminating in the years after graduation. The key changes during older adolescence (15 to 18/19 year-olds) involve:

**Intellectual Development**
- developing the ability to engage in reflective thinking (“what do I think?” “why do I think that?”)
- thinking about and planning for the future

**Identity Development**
- beginning the process of establishing a personal identity, which includes an acceptance of one’s sexuality and a commitment to a personally-held system of values and religious beliefs
- shifting from the authority of family to self-chosen authority (oneself), often by establishing an identity that is shaped by significant others (peers and adults)
- experiencing a period of questioning, reevaluation, and experimentation
- developing increasing autonomy in making personal decisions, assuming responsibility for oneself, and regulating one’s own behavior

**Moral Development**
- exercising moral judgments in matters of much greater complexity as one seeks to establish a more personal form of moral reasoning
- reevaluating the moral values received from family, church, and significant others
- searching for a moral code which preserves one’s personal integrity and provides the basis for making decisions

**Interpersonal Development**
- moving toward greater personal intimacy and adult sexuality
- developing the capability for more mutual, trusting, deep, and enduring personal friendships with members of the same sex and opposite sex that provide acceptance, love, affirmation, and the opportunity to honestly share one’s deepest self
- expanding one’s social perspective to encompass the larger world

**Faith Development**
- exploring and questioning the faith handed down by family and church
- searching for a style of faith and belief which is personally held
- beginning the process of taking responsibility for one’s own faith life, commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes
- exploring a personal relationship with God
Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

The developmental needs of young adolescents arise out of the changes listed above. They provide a very useful framework for understanding the positive possibilities of early adolescence, thereby providing a solid basis upon which to build ministry strategies and programming. The following describes the eight key developmental needs of young adolescents.

Opportunities for Self-Definition
- opportunities to better understand, define, and accept who they are as individuals
- opportunities to explore their widening social world and to reflect upon the meaning of new experiences, so that they can consider themselves participants in society
- opportunities for young adolescents of ethnic cultures to achieve a positive orientation toward their own culture and white American culture; to affirm their ethnicity through observation of ceremonies, retention of native language, and reinforcement of specific attitudes, beliefs, and practices

Competence and Achievement
- opportunities to find out what they are good at doing and to know what they do is valued by others whom they respect
- opportunities that encourage the practice of new skills, public performance and recognition, and reflection on personal and group accomplishments

Positive Social Interaction with Adults and Peers
- opportunities to develop interpersonal skills
- opportunities to learn how to develop a relationship with their parents that is reflective of their growing autonomy and utilizes new patterns of communicating
- opportunities to form positive peer relationships and support, especially through structured programs
- opportunities for caring relationships with adults who like and respect them, who share their own experiences, views, values, and feelings, and who serve as role models and advisors

Physical Activity
- opportunities to utilize their energy and growing bodies through activities that require physical movement or expression

Meaningful Participation in Families, Schools, Churches, and Community Organizations
- opportunities to participate in making decisions about activities that shape their lives and as active leaders or participants who can make a viable contribution to the success of those activities
- opportunities to participate as valued members of the faith community and as leaders in church ministries and programs
- opportunities for exposure to situations in which they can use their skills to solve real life problems and affect the world around them, such as community service programs
Creative Expression
- opportunities to express to the external world who they are on the inside (feelings, interests, abilities, thoughts) through a variety of activities, such as music, writing, sports, art, drama, cooking
- activities that enable them to experience and test out new and different forms of self-expression

Personal Religious Experience
- opportunities to explore “the big questions” in life, questions whose answers can only be comprehended within the context of faith and religion
- opportunities for a deeper and more personal relationship with God

Structure and Clear Limits
- provision of structure and guidance for young adolescents in making decisions about their behavior that involve them in the process of decision-making
- provision of structure that helps them stay focused on a task, persevere in their various efforts and succeed, which leads to an increase in self-esteem
- provision of structure and clear limits that helps them feel safe in their activities, which can empower them to live with joy and confidence


Developmental Needs of Older Adolescents

The developmental needs of older adolescents arise out of the changes listed above. They provide a very useful framework for understanding the positive possibilities of older adolescence, thereby providing a solid basis upon which to build ministry strategies and programming. The following describes several of the central developmental needs of older adolescents.

Exploration and Experimentation
- opportunities to experiment with a wide array of behaviors, roles, attitudes, relationships, ideas, and activities as they develop their own identity and faith identity
- opportunities to explore who they are and who they can become by reflecting on self in relation to others
- opportunities for youth of ethnic cultures to achieve a positive orientation toward their own culture and white American culture; to affirm their ethnicity through observation of ceremonies, retention of native language, and reinforcement of specific attitudes, beliefs, and practices

Adult Sexuality
- opportunities to understand their sexual growth and integrate their sexuality into their own personality in a holistic way
- opportunities to develop healthy values and attitudes regarding their own sexuality

Interpersonal Relationships
- opportunities to form positive relationships and experiences with peers in a comfortable and secure environment and to develop friendship-making and friendship-maintaining skills
- opportunities to learn how to develop a relationship with parents that is reflective of their growing autonomy and utilizes new patterns of communicating

Adult Mentors
- opportunities to develop relationships with adult Christians who affirm their journey and struggles, explore sensitive issues with them, listen to their stories and questions, share their own faith journey, and ask questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection

Meaningful Roles in the Community and Society
- opportunities to participate with other older adolescents as full members and leaders in the community, society and church
- opportunities to explore, discuss, and act on local and global justice issues; to develop an active responsibility for what happens in their community and world, and to be involved in meaningful community service
- opportunities to be involved in the decision-making, planning, and implementation of programs that serve them
Preparing for the Future
• opportunities to acquire the competencies necessary for adult roles, such as goal setting, problem solving, time management, and decision making
• opportunities to explore life options and plan their futures (education, career) and to help them acquire the skills, knowledge and experience for their chosen fields; to link more closely the worlds of school and work

Personal Value System and Decision-Making Skills
• opportunities to discuss conflicting values and formulate their own value system
• opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in making decisions and to apply Christian moral values in making moral judgments

Personal Faith
• opportunities to explore and question the faith they have been given by their family and the faith community and develop their own faith identity
• opportunities to explore what it means to be and live as a person of faith today
• opportunities to develop a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ
Needs of Youth Worksheet

Choose 4 of the developmental needs of youth

- Younger Adolescents: Opportunities for Self-Definition, Competency and Achievement, etc.
- Older Adolescents: Exploration and Experimentation, Adult Sexuality, etc.

For the four you choose, offer some practical suggestions about how the Church can address these needs:

What practical suggestions do you have for families/parents to address these needs?

What practical suggestions do you have for young people themselves to address their own needs within this area?
Styles of Faith

According to John Westerhoff, faith grows like the rings of a tree, with each ring adding to and changing the tree somewhat, yet building on that which has grown before. Therefore, Westerhoff offers a tree analogy and proposes four rings which are involved in the growth process.

1. Experienced Faith
At the core is the faith which we experience from our earliest years either in life. We receive the faith that is important to those who nurture us. The way it molds and influences their lives makes an indelible impression on us, creating the core of our faith. This level of faith is usually associated with the impressionable periods of life when a person is dependent on others, such as during early childhood.

2. Affiliative Faith
As a child gradually displays the beliefs, values, and practices of one's family and church, there is another ring formed. The child takes on the characteristics of his or her family and becomes a part of the faith tradition. The concerns for belonging, for security, and for a sense of power (and identity) that come from group membership are the key drives in forming one's faith concept during this period. This level of faith is expressed, at the earliest, during the young adolescent years.

3. Searching Faith
Faith development reaches a crucial junction when one becomes aware that personal beliefs or experience may no longer be exactly the same as those of the group, or when a person begins to question some of the commonly held beliefs or practices. This occurs as one naturally recognizes that his or her faith is formed more by others (parents, peers, church, etc.) than by personal conviction. The decision must be faced whether or not to develop, express, and accept personal responsibility for one's religious beliefs. Often there is experimentation in which persons try out alternatives or commit themselves to persons or causes which promise help in establishing personal conviction and active practice of one's faith.

4. Owned Faith
The culmination of the faith development process finds expression in a personal, owned faith. This best could be described as a conversion experience, in which a person has reoriented his or her life and now claims personal ownership of and responsibility for beliefs and practices. Characteristics of this phase include close attention to practicing one's faith as well as believing it. This level of faith, according to Westerhoff, is God's intention for everyone; we all are called to reach our highest potential.

Adapted from:
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
   Bless them with your guiding grace
   as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
   that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
   that they may believe in themselves
   and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
   that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
   in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
   in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
   in the journey of faith we walk with them,
   in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship
   in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
**Evaluation Form**

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Diocese of Helena
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Planning Meaningful Prayer Experiences

This workshop helps parish leaders come to fuller understanding of the elements of a meaningful prayer experience. Participants will have the opportunity to learn effective ways to plan for prayer within youth ministry and to preside at prayer.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Acknowledgements

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The eight dimensions of prayerful youth ministry (pp. 4-7) are adapted from “Prayerful Youth Ministry” by Tom East in Youth Ministry Access. Copyright © Center for Ministry Development, 2004. www.youthministryaccess.org. All rights reserved.
The Ministry of Prayer and Worship

“One of the cardinal principles of prayer is that God does speak and always speaks first. Prayer then is what I say, and it is always a response to God … It is truer to say that the reason I want to pray at all is that God has spoken to me and I want to speak to God in response.”


The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes prayer as gift, covenant, and communion (see #2558 to #2565).

• Prayer is gift because we receive even our hunger for prayer as grace from God.
• Prayer is covenant because we recognize that it is “the heart that prays” (CCC #2562). Our prayer is our lifeline in our relationship with God; it is the source of our integration as a person and the compass that guides our communication with others.
• Prayer is communion because in prayer we are resting in and waiting on God as Holy Trinity.

Gift, covenant, and communion: These are words that describe a powerful relationship that is possible in the heart of prayer. Our job as ministry leaders is to help youth receive the gift, enter more deeply into covenantal relationship with God, and experience the communion that God has prepared for them in love.

“The ministry of prayer and worship celebrates and deepens young people’s relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, community prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the spirit at work in their lives; it incorporates young people more fully into the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people and it fosters family rituals and prayers.”


Prayerful youth ministry includes the following:
Prayerful Youth Ministry

There are at least eight unique ways that we can develop a more prayerful youth ministry program. Within these dimensions are opportunities for us to communicate the importance of prayer for Catholic Christians and the diversity of prayer styles.

1. **Promote participation in the sacraments, especially Eucharist.** The sacraments are the way we pray as Catholics. Any planning for prayer with youth should focus upon building toward our participation together in the central prayer of our faith, which is Mass. Additionally, youth should be encouraged to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to celebrate with the parish community through the other sacraments of the Church.

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2. **Promote and provide a variety of communal prayer experiences.** Communal prayer introduces youth to our tradition of prayer and ritual and gives us an opportunity to pray with youth about the joys and concerns of their life. Communal prayer experiences should use a variety of styles, lengths, and prayer traditions so that young people experience the richness of our tradition. Prayer also gives us a great opportunity to use the symbols, rituals, and styles of the many cultures that make up our parish community, but also the whole Church.

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3. **Teach youth to pray.** Part of becoming a prayerful youth ministry is teaching youth to pray individually. We teach youth to pray each time we have them participate in communal prayer, but we can be intentional in teaching youth the prayer traditions of our faith and providing youth with a way to pray, a time to pray, and places to pray. As part of our faith formation efforts with youth, we can teach about prayer and introduce them to a variety of prayer practices. By doing this, we help them develop the skills they need to make prayer a part of their everyday life, and something that they can turn to in times of struggle.

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4. **Pray the moments of youth ministry.** Most youth ministry programs depend on prayer to help open and/or close their gatherings. But we can move beyond this by infusing prayer into all of youth ministry. When someone is hurting, we stop and pray for them. Before leaving on the bus, we offer a pray for a safe journey. We pray before meals, at the soup kitchen before serving, and for the birthday boy or girl. Praying these moments is being truthful about our relationship with God. Youth who experience us praying this way will pick up this pattern in their own lives; when this happens, prayer moves from the “should do” list and becomes and natural as breathing or eating.

| Positives | Room for Growth |
5. **Pray with and for youth.** Young people should experience us as people of prayer. We should pray with youth, especially when they share something important that is happening in their lives. We should tell youth that we are praying for them and for their intentions within our daily prayer life. We can create ways within our youth ministry where young people can ask for prayers— an intention book, a prayer wall, a place on the website for intentions.

Positives

Room for Growth

6. **Pray as a team.** Youth catch us in the act of living faithfully—shared prayer is a part of that. Take time as a team of people who serve youth to pray about your ministry. Teams that work together, laugh together, and pray together being steadiness, consistency, and faithfulness to their ministry.

Positives

Room for Growth
7. **Support families in prayer.** We can encourage families to pray at home with their teens by providing resources and support so that families find way to pray together that work for them. We can provide time for families to pray together and talk about prayer within youth/parent gatherings. We can encourage families to create a prayer table or space, a prayer intention list, and to take time during meals, at bed time, or other times to pray together. We can provide parents with resources to help them pray with youth during the moments of family life – the fun things like birthdays and graduations and the times of conflict and reconciliation.

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8. **Include youth in planning and leading prayer.** Youth grow in their experience and readiness as we teach them to pray, as we take the time to plan prayer together, and as we provide formation for them as prayer leaders.

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Planning Communal Prayer Experiences

Pay Attention to the Context
When planning prayer, it is very important to pay attention to the context.

- Is there a larger activity of which the prayer is a part?
- Will the young people come to prayer energized? Introspective? As strangers? After a profound experience?
- What is the age of the assembly (those coming to the prayer)?
- How comfortable are they with each other? With praying together?
- What is their experience of prayer?
- Do we need to introduce them to new styles, or music, or ritual?
- What prayer styles will be used?

Prepare First
When planning prayer, it is important to prepare carefully, paying attention to the overall plan.

- Spend time talking about the context of your prayer so you can make good decisions about what would be appropriate.
- Keep the main thing, the main thing. If you are planning a morning prayer, plan the prayer around the context of “Morning Praise,” rather than someone’s favorite song, prayer style, or story.
- Be intentional about choosing prayer elements that will work well with your context and work well together.
- Know what your resources are and come to your planning with the resources handy.
- Mentor and teach young people and/or adults how to plan prayer.
- Train young people and/or adults how to preside at prayer by teaching skills and then practicing the skills.
Use a Variety of Styles
In planning prayer, it is important to use a variety of prayer styles, including traditional, composed, and spontaneous prayers.

Types of Prayer (the objective of your prayer)
1. Blessing and adoration of God
2. Petition for our own needs (including asking for forgiveness)
3. Intercession for the needs of others
4. Thanksgiving
5. Praise

Styles (what approaches do you wish to take)
- Scripture
- Meditation
- Contemplation
- Reflection
- Music and song
- Spontaneous
- Ritual
- Silence
- Gesture or dance
- Journaling

Forms (how will you structure the prayer)
- Traditional spoken prayers—Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory to God, etc.
- Devotions—Stations of the Cross, novenas, Eucharistic Adoration, etc.
- Liturgical—Liturgy of the Hours, Sacraments, Eucharistic liturgy, etc.
- Spontaneous—the prayers of the heart
- Composed—Prayer of St. Francis, contemporary prayer books, etc.
- Silence—creating time and space for listening
- Litany—praise, thanks, petitions, rosary, etc.
- Blessings—of objects, events, or persons
- Scriptural Reflection—Listening to the Word of God, Lectio Divina, etc.

Consider the following when thinking about types, styles, and forms of prayer:
- No one style will work in all situations. Make sure you use a wide variety of prayer forms that are a part of our Catholic tradition.
- Help young people name what helps them pray best and then find new ways of providing those opportunities for them.

Use a variety of music and songs:
- It is important to recognize the variety of music styles that name our relationship with God and each other. Sometimes the songs we use will be high energy and joyful, other times our songs are reflective and solemn.
• Young people have their own musical styles and tastes. They are not always represented in “church” music; however, even traditional hymns can be made more youth friendly with a little attention to rhythm and style.
• Let youth help plan for music and use their musical talents whenever possible.
• Use contemporary Christian music when appropriate.
• In liturgical settings, music is an integral part of the way we pray. It is important that the music is selected to match with the function of the liturgical movement.

There is a Pattern
In prayer, there is a pattern of movement that guides our liturgical celebrations, and serves as a model for all communal prayer experience. In the Eucharistic liturgy, we first gather, then listen to the readings and homily, then respond to the Good News in our celebration of the Eucharist, and then are sent forth. These same movements will help us plan more interactive and meaningful prayers.

• **Gather**—The first part of the prayer needs to help those who are gathered to become aware of their relationship to God and their relationship to each other. Consider the following:
  ✓ actions, gesture, music, singing, proclamations, litanies, gathering prayer

• **Listen**—The second movement of the prayer gives those gathered a chance to hear the Scripture or a current story which allows everyone to reflect on how God is active in their life. Consider the following:
  ✓ Scripture readings, contemporary prayers, drama, videos, personal stories, witness reflections, music, songs, psalms, gestures, litanies, silence

• **Respond**—The third movement of prayer reminds us that it is not enough to just hear the word of God, we must keep it. How will we respond to our awareness of how God continues to love us unconditionally? Consider the following:
  ✓ spontaneous and composed prayers, intercessions, The Lord’s Prayer, psalms, songs, music, actions, gestures, dance, journaling, ritual

• **Send Forth**—The final movement of prayer sends us forth with a renewed sense of our mission to live the Gospel each and every day. Prayer helps us to focus on the big picture but also the simple way that each of us needs to be a disciple to those around us. Consider the following:
  ✓ spontaneous and composed prayers, music, songs, actions, gestures, blessings, commissioning, exchanging the sign of peace, silence
Prayer Planning Sheet

Step One—Discuss the context of the prayer. Who are we, what are we celebrating, how will we come to prayer, what do we need in that moment? Write a statement that defines the focus for prayer (i.e., the focus of our prayer is celebrating Christian community).

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Step Two—Share Scripture stories (or other stories) that match the context. On a separate page, brainstorm a list of Scripture stories that could be used. Decide which one (or ones) you want to proclaim, and note the chosen Scriptures/readings here.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Step Three—Brainstorm elements and ideas for prayer. What are elements and forms of prayer that could be used? On a separate page, make a list of actions, gestures, music, songs, rituals, and environment ideas. Is there something new that you would like assembly to experience? From that list, narrow down your list to include ideas that match the context and the Scripture that you have chosen. Write the short list here.

______________________________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________________________
Step Four—Put it all together. Where do each of the elements selected fit into the prayer? List the elements in the order that they will occur, including necessary information (page numbers, song title), and the minister in charge.

Gather
The first part of the prayer needs to help those who are gathered to become aware of their relationship to God and their relationship to each other. As the group comes together to pray, what actions, gestures, music, singing, proclamations, litanies, gathering prayer, or other preparations will help this to occur?

Listen
The second movement of the prayer gives those now gathered a chance to hear the Scriptures or current stories which allow us to reflect on how God is active in our lives. Readings, drama, videos, personal stories, witness reflections, music, songs, psalms, gestures, litanies, and silence are some elements which might be included.

Respond
The third movement of prayer reminds us that it is not enough to just hear the word of God, we must keep it. How will we respond to our awareness of how God continues to love us unconditionally? Options include: spontaneous and composed prayers, intercessory prayer, The Lord’s Prayer, psalms, songs, music, actions, or gestures.

Send Forth
The final movement of prayer sends us forth with a renewed sense of our mission to live the Gospel each and every day. Prayer helps us to focus on the big picture but also the simple way that each of us needs to be a disciple to those around us. Spontaneous and composed prayers, music, songs, actions and gestures, blessing, commissioning, and exchanging a sign of peace are some of the ways this can occur.
Step Five—Rehearse. Give everyone who has a role in the prayer an opportunity to rehearse their parts of the prayer. When necessary, teach people the skills necessary to preside at prayer.

Step Six—Set-up. Take the time necessary to set the environment, creating the atmosphere for prayer that you want. Make sure that you have the needed resources at hand.

Step Seven—Pray Together. Throughout the process, and especially just prior to leading prayer, take a moment to pray together. Ask God to use your gifts and talents to lead others towards Him.

Step Eight—Evaluate. Affirm people for their good work and reflect on the following questions:

- How effective was our planning process?
- As ministers of prayer, how did we do in our various roles?
- How did the assembly experience the prayer?
- What did we learn?
- What would we change?
- What would we keep the same?
Ministerial Roles

Prayer Leader—guiding the assembly through the prayer, giving instructions, and facilitating rituals. Specifically, the Prayer Leader:

✓ Gives instructions and leads the assembly to become more comfortable with gestures prior to the start of the prayer experience.
✓ Models what is expected of those gathered for the prayer.
✓ Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and clarity.

How would you prepare yourself to be a Prayer Leader?

Proclaimer of the Word—responsible for helping the assembly hear God’s Word. Specifically, the Proclaimer:

✓ Proclaims the Scripture in such a way that the assembly can enter into the reading.
✓ Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and clarity.

How would you prepare yourself to be a Proclaimer of the Word?

Minister(s) of Music and Song—create opportunities for the members of the assembly to participate in the songs and pray with the music. Specifically the Minister(s) of Music and Song:

✓ Give instructions and lead the assembly in the songs. Provide time prior to the start of prayer for rehearsing or learning songs.
✓ Choose songs that invite the participation of the assembly.
✓ Attend to the volume, instrumentation, tempo, and arrangement of songs and music that encourage the assembly to participate and pray.

How would you prepare yourself to be a Minister of Music and Song?
Ministers of Environment and Welcoming—create an environment that helps the assembly focus on the prayer, specifically by engaging their senses and ensuring that they can see and hear all that is going on. Specifically, Ministers of Environment and Welcome:

☑ Welcome the assembly as they gather, help them find their seats, distribute any music books or worship aids.

☑ Help to set the tone for the prayer by pre-setting the lighting, space, and environmental elements.

How would you prepare yourself to be a Minister of Environment and Welcome?

Ministers of Ritual and Movement—leaders of the rituals who demonstrate and give instructions to the assembly. Specifically, Ministers of Ritual and Movement:

☑ Teach or demonstrate the movement or ritual to the assembly prior to the prayer, or during it.

☑ Choose gestures and rituals that can be easily learned by the assembly.

How would you prepare yourself to be a Minister of Ritual and Movement?
**Evaluation Form**

What did you find most valuable about this training workshop?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Planning for Retreat Ministry

This workshop assists parishes in understanding more about the basic structures of retreats, the different elements that are necessary for effective retreats, and provides the opportunity to design a retreat.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

Gather
After a minute of silence, begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Listen: Ephesians 2:4-10

Response: A New Heart

Our Response is: God of Love, speak your truth in my heart.

Gracious God, open my heart to the pain in other’s lives,
   the yearnings and confusion, the hopelessness other’s feel.
   Help me to see and respond. Response.

Loving God, open my heart to the beauty that is all around me,
   the natural world, the beauty of children, the love within relationships.
   Help me to grow in love and appreciation. Response.

Creator God, open my heart so I can be more like you
   give me strength to live up to your graciousness
   sensitivity to respond to those in need
   courage to challenge what is unjust.
   Help me to live a life of faith. Response.

Sending Forth
Glory to you,
O Lord our God,
Your love calls us to be your people.
By sharing our many and diverse gifts
we share in your mission.
We ask you, Lord,
to shape us into a community of faith.
Nourish us by your word and sacraments
that we may grow into the image of Jesus.
Through the power of your Holy Spirit,
heal us that we, in turn,
may heal the wounded.
Form us to be instruments of love,
justice, and peace in our land,
and send us to proclaim your saving work.

Renew us, Lord,
that we may renew the face of the earth.
Amen.
**Definition of a Youth Retreat**
A youth retreat is “a time when adolescents withdraw from their normal activities to reflect upon their lives and identity in Christ Jesus.” (Guidelines for Youth Retreats, Diocese of Sacramento, 1987)

- Reflect on the movement of God
- Encounter Christ alive among us
- Experience community
- Respond to the call to discipleship

**Retreats are marked by**
- Respect for the retreat participant
- Hospitality: physical, psychological, intellectual, and ecclesial
- Attention to the affective and attitudinal dimensions of faith growth
- Opportunity for experiences of Christian community, prayer, witness, and discernment

**Retreats need a broader context**
- Situated in the context of overall pastoral ministry.
- Designed with specific youth in mind:
  - WHO is the retreat for?
  - WHY will this retreat be held? (occasion or purpose)
  - WHEN is the retreat being held? (liturgical year / school year connection)
  - WHAT will be the theme, design, and focus of the retreat?
- Attention should be paid to preparing the retreat participant and her/his family for the experience.
- Information, resources, and support should be provided for parents of youth who participate in the retreat.
- Prior to the retreat, the team should anticipate the follow-through for the participant
  - Connecting back home with family and routine
  - Connecting back to parish and school communities
  - Connecting with peer community
  - Connecting with continued opportunities for discipleship:
    - Community / Ministry / Service / Faith Growth / Prayer
Elements of Youth Retreats
Examples of each element are given. Not all examples of each element must be present on all retreats.

**Community**
- Icebreakers
- Hospitality
- Community Building
- Social Time
- Unstructured Time

**Faith Growth**
- Scripture
- Teaching/Sharing of Tradition
- Witness
- Discernment

**Prayer**
- Individual Prayer
- Communal Prayer
- Occasions of Prayer/Blessings
- Meditation /Contemplation
- Liturgy
- Reconciliation
- Commissioning

**Process**
- Quiet Time/Reflection
- Spiritual Direction
- Presentations
- Small and Large Group Discussions
- Music/Media/Audio Visuals
- Learning Experiences/Simulations

**Recommended Retreat Components**

**Physical**
- Adequate sleep
- Adequate recreation time
- Balanced diet
- Access to outdoors and nature, if possible

**Psychological/Social/Catechetical**
- Balance of private time and group time
- Opportunity for guidance and counsel
- Reflection on human experience
- Community building
- Opportunities for participation and involvement
- Creative activity and expression
- Input and presentations
- Discussion and sharing opportunities

**Spiritual**
- Liturgical celebration: priority on eucharistic celebrations for two-day retreats; reconciliation service, if in keeping with retreat design
- Prayer: communal; private; reflection time
- Scripture

**Supportive Components**
- Orientation or preparation of participants, pre-retreat
- Follow-up process
- Evaluation by team and participants
- Team training, plus sound planning and program design

(From *Guidelines for Youth Retreats*, Diocese of Sacramento, 1987. Used with permission.)
Developing a Theme

A retreat is developed around a theme.
- The theme for the retreat is selected for a particular group of people at a particular time.
- The key question is: What aspect of the Good News should we share within this retreat?
- The amount of content should be moderate to allow for prayerful reflection, integration of the insights, and discernment of “back-home” applications.
- One way to select a retreat theme is to reflect on the Scripture readings for the Sunday liturgy and on the community who is gathering. A theme may emerge from putting these reflections together.

A retreat theme is developed throughout the elements of the retreat.
- The theme is reflected throughout all of the elements of the retreat: in the community building, the environment, the hospitality, the socials, the prayers, and the presentations.
- A theme can be broken into several topics. In a weekend retreat, these topics could be covered in five to seven sessions. Each session could be approximately 90 minutes to 120 minutes in length.

A retreat session includes a variety of ways to think about, consider, and apply the insights of a particular topic. A typical session may include:
- A focusing activity designed to engage participants into the topic
- A teaching from Tradition and Scripture
- Individual reflection time / journaling
- Group activity
- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion
- Faith witness to the topic
- Identification of “back home” applications and implications
A Sample Weekend Retreat Format

Friday
Afternoon  Travel to Retreat Center/Dinner on the way
7:00 PM  Arrival, Get settled into dorms
7:30 PM  Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Prayer
8:00 PM  Community Building
  • Ice-breaker activities
  • Conversation starters
  • Divide into small groups for retreat
  • Group builders and introduction
9:00 PM  Break
9:15 PM  Session One
  • Focusing Activity / Presentation / Group Work / Reflection / Closing
10:15 PM Break / Social /Snacks
10:45 PM Night Prayer

Saturday
8:00 AM  Wake-up call
9:00 AM  Breakfast
9:30 AM  Gathering Activity, Ice-breaker, Group Songs
10:00 AM  Session Two

11:30 AM  Break with snacks
11:45 AM  Session Three

1:15 PM  Lunch / Afternoon Recreation
3:30 PM  Community Building / Gathering Activity
3:45 PM  Session Four

5:15 PM  Break
5:45 PM  Dinner and Free Time
7:00 PM  Session Five

8:30 PM  Evening Prayer

9:00 PM  Break
9:15 PM  Community Social Time: use music, video movies, games, other options

11:00 PM  Everyone in their rooms
11:30 PM  Lights Out

Sunday
8:30 AM  Wake-up call
9:30 AM  Breakfast
10:00 AM  Gathering Activity, Ice-breaker, Group Songs
10:30 AM  Session Six

12:00 NOON  Lunch and Recreation
1:00 PM  Prepare for Closing Liturgy
2:00 PM  Liturgy of the Eucharist

3:00 PM  Closing Comments, Blessings, and Clean-Up
3:45 PM  Departure
Leadership Tasks

- Plan Retreat (theme, topics, objectives)
- Arrange for Facility
- Develop a Budget (anticipate costs and scholarship funds)
- Plan for Transportation
- Plan for Publicity and Invitations
- Plan for Registration (health forms, permission slips)
- Prepare Prayers
- Prepare Liturgy / Invite Presider
- Prepare Community Building
- Plan for Music
- Prepare Sessions
- Plan for Pastoral Care needs
- Plan for Supervision / Chaperons
- Plan for Meals and Hospitality
- Prepare the Team

Leadership Roles

Possible leadership roles may include some or all of the following:

- Retreat Director – Leads team and brings the pieces of the retreat together into one vision for participants
- M.C. – Guides participants through retreat experience by introducing activities, leading icebreakers, and keeping track of time
- Session Presenters – Plans and leads one or more sessions
- Witness Talk – Prepares and presents a witness talk
- Small Group Leaders – Leads small group activities and discussions
- Prayer Leader – Leads prayer and prepares community for liturgy
- Music Leader – Leads music for community building and prayer
- Chaperons – Supervises youth during recreation and overnight
- Kitchen Crew / Meal Director – Plans and prepares meals and hospitality
- First Aid Coordinator – Provides first aid and anticipates emergency needs

Guide to Using Young People on the Retreat Team

1. Define the role of the young person very clearly.
2. Do not give a young person an adult role. For example, young people cannot chaperon other young people or be responsible for discipline.
3. Be sure the young people see one of their primary roles as being a good participant.
4. Challenge them to reflect on why they want to be a part of this ministry.
5. Be sure training is provided for any task that a young person is asked to do, and be sure some type of pre-retreat testing ground is available for them to try out what they have learned.
6. Be appreciative of their work, and sensitive to their needs.
7. A young person should generally not be a team member on their first retreat experience.
8. Encourage them to pray for each other, themselves, and the retreatants.
Resources for Retreats - Books


Burns, Jim (general editor) and Mike DeVries (compiler). *Incredible Retreats.* Published by Gospel Light, 1999. Use of their Bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings and to reflect Catholic teaching.


Use of their Bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings and to reflect Catholic teaching.


Use of their Bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings and to reflect Catholic teaching.
Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
   Bless them with your guiding grace
   as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
   that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
   that they may believe in themselves
   and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
   that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
   in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
   in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
   in the journey of faith we walk with them,
   in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship
   in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Planning for Dynamic Youth Ministry

This workshop helps parishes assess their current strengths and weaknesses, identify resources for youth ministry, and develop a practical plan for developing more effective ministry with adolescents.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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**Opening Prayer**

**Gather:** A Litany of Thanks. What are we thankful for today?

**Listen:** Scripture – Psalm 150

**Respond**

1. Praise be to you, O Lord, for life and for my intense desire to live; praise be to you for the mystery of love and for the intense desire to be a lover; praise be to you for this day and another chance to live and love.

2. Thank you, Lord, for friends who stake their claim on my heart, for enemies who disturb my soul and bump my ego, for tuba players and storytellers, and trapeze troupes.

3. Thank you, Lord, for singers of songs, for teachers of songs, who help me along the way, … and for listeners.

4. Thank you, Lord, for those who attempt beauty rather than curse ugliness, for those who take stands rather than take polls, for those who risk being right rather … than pandering to being liked for those who do something rather than talking about everything.

5. Lord, grant me grace, then, and a portion of your spirit that I may so live as to give others cause to be thankful for me,

6. Thankful because I have not forgotten how to hope, how to laugh, how to cry, how to say, “I’m sorry,” how to forgive, how to bind up wounds, how to dream, how to pray, how to love when it’s hard, and how to dare when it is dangerous.

**All:** Undamn me, Lord, that praise may flow more easily from me than wants, thanks more readily than complaints. Praise be to you, Lord, for life; praise be to you for another chance to live.

*(From *Guerrillas of Grace*, by Ted Loder [San Diego LuraMedia, 1984], pp. 34-35.)*

**Sending Forth**

Lord, we rejoice in this opportunity to gather in your name. Each time we come together, we are gifted with your presence as we struggle to serve you through our ministry in your Church.

We ask that the work of this meeting be a vessel for us to serve our young people and you.

Guide us who serve through this time together so that our ideas might be well-expressed, our insights a reflection of your goodness, and our disagreements serve to reveal greater wisdom.

**All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.
An Overview of Youth Ministry

Definition of Catholic Youth Ministry

“Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.”


Three Goals of Catholic Youth Ministry

• **Goal 1:** To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. (*RTV*, p. 9)
• **Goal 2:** To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. (*RTV*, p. 11)
• **Goal 3:** To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. (*RTV*, p. 15)

Settings for Youth Ministry

There are four settings where youth can be ministered to:

- **Youth** in context, as gifted and growing
- **Families** as domestic church, as central and capable
- **Parish** as a responsible, resourceful community
- **Wider Community** as collaborators and resources

Components of a Comprehensive Youth Ministry

The components describe specific areas of the mission of the Church that work together to provide ministry with adolescents. “These components provide a framework for the Catholic community to **respond** to the needs of young people and to **involve** young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community.” (*RTV*, p. 26)

- **Advocacy:** Interpreting the needs of young people, standing up for young people, both as individuals and as a youth community.
- **Catechesis:** Deepening the faith of young people through teaching and reflection—working towards transformation.
- **Community Life:** Building community, not just between young people, but with their families and engaging youth in the broader parish community.
- **Evangelization:** Proclaiming the Good News and inviting youth into relationship with Jesus Christ through ongoing witness.
- **Justice and Service:** Engaging young people in helping and serving other people, and understanding the Gospel call to justice through education and reflection.
- **Leadership Development:** Inviting, training, and supporting adults and young people into leadership for youth ministry and with the broader parish community.
- **Pastoral Care:** Providing prevention programs for youth and families, caring for those in crisis, and providing guidance during times of decisions and moral choices.
- **Prayer and Worship:** Helping youth to develop an individual prayer life, experience a variety of communal prayers, and involving youth in the sacramental life of the Church.

Youth Ministry Training In-Services provided by the OYYAM in the Diocese of Helena
Flexible and Adaptable Programming

“The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing ministry programming for adolescents:

• a diversity of program settings
• age-specific programs for young and older adolescents
• family-centered programs for the entire family, for parents, for foster parents, for grandparents raising children, adolescents
• intergenerational parish programs
• community-wide programs
• a balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of comprehensive ministry…
• a variety of approaches to reach all adolescents and their families, including parish, school, and community-wide programs
• small-group programs and small ecclesial community experiences
• home-based programs, activities, and resources
• one-on-one and mentoring programs and activities
• independent or self-directed programs
• a variety of scheduling options and program settings to respond to the reality of the busy lives and commitments of adolescents and their families
• use of current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation” (RTV, p. 25).

• non-gathered strategies (birthday cards, study kits, newsletters, bulletin boards celebrating youth accomplishments, etc.)

Elements in an Effective Model for Dynamic Youth Ministry

In the national study of youth ministry, Effective Practices for Dynamic Youth Ministry, the researchers found that effective youth ministry in a parish included the following eight elements. Your parish will address each of these elements in a unique way, based on your past experiences, the resources available to you at the parish, the resources you choose to use, and the strength of your parish community.

1. **Regular pattern of gathering**
   - It is important that there is regularity to your youth gathering, i.e., weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
   - Youth need to know that they can count on the gathering.
   - The regular gathering allows for community can be nurtured.
   - Parents can encourage their child’s participation, and it can become part of the family pattern.
   - There is no need to have only one group. Multiple groups can meet at different times, with different focuses, based on age and/or interest.

This regular gathering (known as youth group, youth night, etc.) should have a clear focus and a structured way that young people interact with each other and the adults present. Most gathered youth nights include the following elements:

- Welcome and introductions (5 minutes)
- Community building activities (connected to the theme of the program; 10-20 minutes)
- Content (using one or more of the following methods: presentation, guest speaker, movie clip, discussion, small group activity, music, action step; 30-75 minutes)
- Announcements (sign-ups for future programs or events; 5 minutes)
- Prayer (5 to 15 minutes)
- Refreshments (15 minutes)

*Total time is 90-120 minutes for high school groups, 60-90 minutes for middle school groups.*

2. **Special events**
   - Special events include any gatherings that are outside of the regular pattern of gathering.
   - These can include day-long events, evening programs on a different day, extended programs, weekend events, or longer trips.
   - Special events provide opportunities for youth with different interests and availability to participate.
   - These events also often provide for a deeper experience of community to develop because of the extended timeframe.

Special events may include programs and events such as: retreats, service experiences, mission trips, gender-specific programs, social activities (dances, game nights, sports leagues, etc.), trips (beach, skiing, camping, etc.), National Catholic Youth Conference, local conferences, leadership training events, and advocacy events (Walk for Hunger, Right to Life, March of Dimes, etc.).
3. **Intentional catechesis**
   - Catechesis is at the heart of youth ministry. Faith formation must be a part of what we do with and for young people.
   - Leaders capitalize on informal, teachable moments and infuse faith conversations and modeling into all programs, regardless of their primary focus.
   - Intentional faith learning can happen using a variety of methods.
   - For catechesis to be effective, it must be collaborative (not relying on only one person or program to pass on the faith), planned for, and intentional.

There are a variety of methods from which parishes may choose as the primary way of providing catechesis. All can be effective when done with intention and creativity:
   - Religious education and sacramental preparation as a distinct element of youth ministry.
   - Infused throughout youth ministry and parish life involvement. This model does not have a specific religious education program but uses all youth ministry programs to pass on the faith.
   - As part of the whole parish community in an intergenerational model.

4. **Ways to grow deeper**
   - Parishes address the needs of those young people who are looking to grow in their faith and learn more about the Church and their role within it.
   - Youth ministry provides opportunities for youth with different interests. Some will only be drawn to prayer, service, or liturgical programming.
   - Especially important: develop ministry for juniors and seniors who may be more mature and have different questions and life issues than younger adolescents.
   - Avoid “one-size-fits-all” approach to programming.

Ways to grow deeper may include “special events” but these have a clear focus on developing the faith life of the young people. Some examples include: Bible study series, faith sharing series, discipleship groups, faith mentors for younger youth, special retreats for older/serious youth, Christian leadership formation, vocations exploration, etc.

5. **Non-gathered ways to connect**
   - Not all youth will come to parish events. This does not mean that they do not belong to the parish community or do not deserve attention. Non-gathered strategies communicate care and concern for young people, regardless of their participation in events.
   - Connect with youth by reaching out to them in their homes, schools, and the community.
   - Be present where youth are—supporting them in their everyday activities.
   - Highlighting young people for the parish community—helping to affirm youth involved in school, parish, and community activities.

Parishes often struggle to know if their non-gathered strategies are worth the effort. If a young person feels valued and affirmed, then it is worth the effort. It is important to recognize that these non-gathered strategies are focused on all the young people of the parish—every registered youth. Consider some of the following strategies: send all youth a...
birthday card, Christmas card, and Easter card; send newsletters and letters of invitation; send a card of congratulations to young people who do something good (sports, plays, community service, grades, etc.); provide brightly colored T-shirts for parishioners to wear to sporting events that say “[insert parish name] loves our youth!”; send study bags home to youth preparing for exams; engage youth one-on-one in mentoring programs for parish ministries.

6. Connect youth to the parish
   • Help youth participate in sacramental life of church, especially Eucharist, by ensuring that liturgy engages their senses through quality preaching, music, and good ritual.
   • Provide ways for youth to participate in faith formation, community, and service as part of parish.
   • Plan for youth participation—make them welcome and included. This may include preparing the adults for youth participation and making changes necessary for youth to feel welcomed at parish events.

Whether a young person comes to youth ministry programming or not, they should have a place within the parish community where they feel at home and welcome. Whenever youth are gathered—liturgy, parish events, religious education, etc.—we should ensure that they are treated with respect, their ideas are listened to, and there is a way for them to belong to the community gathered.

7. Connect with families
   • Consider the impact of youth ministry on family life. How often are youth away from their families, and what is the cost to those families?
   • Communicate with parents about youth ministry. This includes information to help parents engage their child when he/she returns from retreats, mission experiences, and other events that are meaningful to the young person.
   • Provide programs and resources to support families of adolescents at home, including links to helpful websites, book recommendations (or a lending library), take-home packets, and newsletters.
   • Provide occasional gatherings for families of adolescents, both with their children present and just-for-adults events.

8. Involve youth in leadership, ministry, and service
   • Youth desire a way to share their gifts. Provide opportunities where young people are able to use their gifts of hospitality, leadership, music, education, etc. Too often youth are asked to help with set-up or other menial tasks.
   • Include youth in leadership roles within liturgical and catechetical ministries.
   • Provide ways for youth to share leadership in youth ministry and in parish life.
   • Provide service involvements for youth and with the parish community.

Eight Elements for Dynamic Youth Ministry Assessment Tool

Parishes with dynamic youth ministry develop models for youth ministry that include these eight elements. Use this assessment tool to identify areas of strength and areas to grow for your community.

For each statement circle one of these options:

- This needs growth – This indicates that this statement does not currently describe your parish and that this area needs to grow.
- We try to do this – This indicates that you are making efforts to make this statement true about your parish but there is more work to do.
- We do this well – This indicates that this statement describes your parish at this time.

1. We have **regular pattern of gathering** with our youth.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

2. We provide a variety of **special events** within which youth can participate.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

3. We provide **intentional catechesis** for adolescents.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

4. We provide a variety of ways for **youth to grow deeper** in faith.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

5. We deliver ministry through a variety of **non-gathered ways to connect** to youth.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

6. We **connect youth to the parish**.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

7. We **connect with families of youth**.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

8. We **involve youth in leadership ministry and service**.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well
Hungers of Youth

The Hunger for Meaning and Purpose
One of the great fears of young people is that much of life simply does not matter, that life is not grounded in meaning. They fear that their families, their relationships, their church, their future and even their lives do not matter. One challenge of youth ministry, therefore, is to provide a Gospel vision of life that identifies and calls into question the false messages contemporary society gives about what it means to be human. Meaning and purpose are found in the call to love, which is the fullness of our humanity, centered in God and expressed in the love of others.

The Hunger for Connection
Young people have a strong need for relationships, for connecting with others on a variety of levels. It is within these connections that love and acceptance are experienced. Ideally, the family is the primary and foundational experience of such connectedness. It is within a healthy family that a child first experiences love, security, and belonging. Young people, then, move toward further connection with their peer group and in individual relationships where acceptance and friendship are experienced. Eventually, young people come to see themselves as connected to the larger communities of school, church, and society. A major challenge we face, therefore, is to provide a faith community of acceptance, belonging, and welcome, where young people can hear the Good News proclaimed and see the Gospel lived out.

The Hunger for Recognition
Young people experience a fundamental need to feel worthwhile and important. This need is met when they experience the attention and interest of others, providing the basis for self-esteem and self-confidence. Young people need to be affirmed in their goodness and in their giftedness. They need to be appreciated and loved. They need to be listened to. Through relationships of trust, acceptance, and understanding, through experiences of feeling connected to others and to the community, through knowing that God, indeed, pays attention and cares for them, young people feel better about themselves, come to self-acceptance, and are enabled to reach out to others.

The Hunger for Justice
The hunger for justice is perhaps the least obvious of the hungers of young people, but still very present in the lives of many of them. From the earliest days of childhood, we hear the cry of “That’s not fair!” There is an innate sense and desire for justice and fairness in young people. They are quick to point out the inequities of life in the distribution of good, possessions, and even opportunities. Directly and indirectly, they experience violence, hatred, and hurt. Our challenge is to not let this hunger for justice succumb to the societal pressures of materialism, consumerism, and individualism. The Gospel calls us to a vision where all have access to the goods and resources of the world, where the poor and the marginalized become a priority, and where justice and peace are signs that the reign of God has broken through.
The Hunger for the Holy

Research demonstrates clearly that many young people experience a spiritual vacuum. They often see a gap between professed belief and actual practice in the faith community, and they frequently experience a church whose teachings seem to be out of touch with their real, lived situations. However, young people continue to search for a faith that makes sense, that provides direction and meaning, and that challenges. They are looking for a language to help them understand their experiences of God, searching for ways to deepen their experiences of the sacred, and seeking a community of people with whom to journey. Young people are looking for a worthwhile adventure. Joining with Jesus in work on behalf of the reign of God he proclaimed is that adventure. Our challenge is to be a community of believers and disciples that invites, welcomes, loves, and involves young people in building up the reign of God.

(The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization – Called to be Witnesses and Storytellers—National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 1993. Used with permission.)

Assessing our Needs

From the Hunger of Youth (above) and your own experience of teenagers, what are the needs of young people within the parish?

What do you think that parents would name as needs of their children?

What does the parish need the young people to know about Church and God?
**Youth Ministry Resources**

There are two excellent resources for comprehensive youth ministry. Both are a collection of resources that can be used to produce excellent youth ministry programming, as well as adding non-gathered strategies and infusing young people into the parish community.

**Youth Ministry Access**

This online subscription website provides resources for gathered youth nights, extended events, and non-gathered strategies. Additionally, there are online training programs for youth leaders and adult leaders in youth ministry. The website is updated seasonally (every three months) with new gathered youth nights and additional resources. The subscription fee is $150 a year and gives everyone in parish youth ministry leadership access to the website. **Youth Ministry Access** is a web service of the Center for Ministry Development. Visit [www.youthministryaccess.org](http://www.youthministryaccess.org) for subscription information, or contact Cheryl Tholcke (cheryl@CMDnet.org) for a 30-day trial subscription to the site (one per parish).

**Youth Ministry Access** is available for both Middle School Youth Ministry and High School Youth Ministry.

**Total Faith Initiative**

This collection of books includes resources for gathered youth nights, extended events, and non-gathered strategies. There are four books dedicated to catechetical sessions, and six books dedicated to the other components of youth ministry. There is also a Coordinator’s Manual to help organize your ministry. These resources include the *Catholic Youth Handbook* (a “textbook” of the faith for youth) and the *Catholic Youth Bible*. The total cost for the books is $335. Visit Saint Mary’s Press ([www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)) for ordering information.

**Total Faith** is designed for High School Youth Ministry.
Websites that Support Youth Ministry

**These organizations might be helpful as you continue to grow your youth ministry. This list is not intended to be complete. It offers some information on companies and organizations that offer resources and information that are useful to those working in youth ministry.**

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development** – [www.usccb.org/cchd/](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/)
This department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is focused on the needs of the poor and disenfranchised in the United States. The site offers many good resources for parishes focusing on justice issues, including a web-media tour of poverty.

**Catholic Relief Services** – [www.catholicrelief.org](http://www.catholicrelief.org)
CRS is the organization that provides humanitarian aid and social programs to foreign countries. They have excellent (free) resources for helping groups explore justice issues (Food Fast, Operation Rice Bowl). The website also provides good information about other countries and the current situations that exist there.

**Center for Ministry Development** – [www.CMDnet.org](http://www.CMDnet.org)
CMD provides programs and resources for Catholic parishes and dioceses. The website has free, downloadable resources, a family calendar, and information on CMD programs and resources.

**Cornerstone Media, Inc.** – [www.cornerstonemedia.org](http://www.cornerstonemedia.org)
Cornerstone Media produces both print and audio materials to help parents, teachers, youth ministers, pastors, and others who work with teens. They use the music that young people listen to everyday as a tool to spark dialogue about values and current issues.

**Disciples Now** – [www.disciplesnow.com](http://www.disciplesnow.com)
This website is dedicated to supporting Catholic youth ministry. They highlight current issues and resources, and have online chats for adults and youth about issues.

**Free the Children** – [www.freethedchildren.com](http://www.freethedchildren.com)
This international organization was started by a young person to respond to the crisis of child labor throughout the world. It has expanded its mission to include helping young people throughout the world.

**Girls and Boys Town** – [www.girlsandboystown.org](http://www.girlsandboystown.org)
Girls and Boys Town is a national organization that helps young people in crisis. The website offers good information about dealing with young people in crisis and offers information to parents and teens.

**Group Publishing** – [www.grouppublishing.com](http://www.grouppublishing.com)
This Christian publisher has resources that can support your ministry. Use of their bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings.

**National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc.** – [www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org)
The NFCYM is the national membership organization of diocesan youth ministry leaders. The website has information about the national conference for youth (NCYC) and adult youth ministers (NCCYM), and often has information about helping youth deal with current situations (e.g., clergy scandal, 9/11).
Oregon Catholic Press – [www.ocp.org](http://www.ocp.org) or [www.spiritandsong.com](http://www.spiritandsong.com)
Oregon Catholic Press is a music publisher that has produced a youth and young adult ministry resource called *Spirit & Song*. *Spirit & Song* includes CDs, music books, and other resources to help parishes use “youth-friendly” music in their prayer and liturgy.

St. Anthony Messenger Press – [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org)
St. Anthony Messenger has two wonderful resources for use with youth ministry. *Youth Updates* address issues of interest to young people. *Catholic Updates* address issues of interest to adults. While *Youth Update* is no longer published, many back issues are available for purchase and many issues are available online.

Saint Mary’s Press – [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)
Saint Mary’s Press offers youth ministry resources in the following areas: catechesis, prayer, and current issues (e.g., clergy scandal, 9/11). In addition, they publish books of prayer written by teens.

St. Meinrad – [www.youthprayer.com](http://www.youthprayer.com)
St. Meinrad hosts a summer youth and liturgy program. This website supports that program and offers information and ideas for young people and youth ministry.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
This is the official website of the U.S. Catholic bishops. Information about specific programs for youth (e.g., World Youth Day) can be found in the Department of Family, Laity, Women, and Youth.

Youth Ministry Network – [www.ymnetwork.net](http://www.ymnetwork.net)
This is a great site for finding other sites that can support Youth Ministry!

Youth Specialties – [www.youthspecialties.com](http://www.youthspecialties.com)
This Christian organization has good resources for community building and “game” ideas. Use of their bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings.

Youth, Sing, Praise – [www.youthsingpraise.org](http://www.youthsingpraise.org)
This summer program is hosted by the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois. It is for youth involved in music and drama.

Summer Mission Programs
- Young Neighbors in Action – [www.youngneighbors.org](http://www.youngneighbors.org)
- Catholic Heart Workcamp – [www.heartworkcamp.com](http://www.heartworkcamp.com)
- Group Workcamp – [www.grouppublishing.com](http://www.grouppublishing.com)
- YouthWorks Mission – [www.youthworks.com](http://www.youthworks.com)
Ideas for Youth Ministry

The following ideas are divided into the eight components of youth ministry as outlined in *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. Look through this list to find new ideas for expanding your current efforts with the youth of your parish.

### Advocacy

- Develop a youth newsletter, written and formatted by youth, for youth. Include an adult and parent insert to send to the entire parish. Provide information about the opportunities for ministry with youth and job descriptions for leadership needed in the programs and strategies.
- Develop a youth hearing to explore the needs, issues, and interests of youth in your community. Invite youth and adults to attend and reflect together on those issues.
- Begin a letter-writing campaign to government, media, and other officials supporting specific legislative initiatives promoting the healthy development of young people and their families.
- Involve young people in parish pastoral councils and committees.
- Sponsor and involve youth in a voter registration drive.

### Catechesis

- Sponsor educational programs on faith themes for adolescents as articulated in *Renewing the Vision*. Utilize a variety of settings and formats (weekly, monthly speaker series, weekend retreats, overnight lock-ins, summer and vacation programs).
- Develop catechetical programming on the same faith theme in three different formats to respond to the diversity of youth schedules: a gathered program sponsored on a fixed date (mini-course, monthly program, weekend), a small group program in homes sponsored on variety of days and times, and an individualized one-on-one study program.
- Invite high school students to be catechists, sharing faith in the child and junior high religious education programs of the parish.
- Send an anniversary card to remember the baptism of each adolescent. Provide one or two reflection questions for parents to help them remember this significant moment as a family.
- Organize Bible study groups designed to help youth re-discover the importance and relevance of Scripture in their lives.
- Provide self-directed learning for youth by using *Youth Updates* which are published by St. Anthony Messenger Press. Distribute the updates and develop a monthly “read-at-home” program with gathered discussions and follow-up.
- Create faith-sharing, interest-topic peer groups for youth involved in different activities or situations, such as: band, athletics, artists, college-bound students, or youth involved in theatre. Provide faith formation materials and adult guides for each group.
**Community Life**

- Build community by sponsoring a variety of social activities, sports, and recreation programs, etc.
- Invite older adolescents to sponsor a Halloween party for younger parishioners.
- Prepare “study-snack” packs for youth during finals week. Involve parish organizations and adult leaders in organizing and delivering the packs.
- Sponsor a potluck for families of adolescents so that parents can meet other parents.
- Provide parish T-shirts to adults who regularly attend school youth programs (athletic and band events, plays, art shows, etc.).
- Sponsor fundraisers for different youth activities. Involve as many youth and adults as possible. Consider fundraisers in which youth and adults will work together in groups, such as spaghetti dinners, car washes, or festivals.
- Send birthday cards to every young person in your parish.

**Evangelization**

- Sponsor retreats for teens on topics such as the challenge of discipleship, and the life and message of Jesus.
- Host a “homecoming” celebration for teens who have not been actively participating in your faith community.
- Plan a youth component for parish renewal programs such as a parish mission or the *Renew* program.
- Divide the teens in your parish into groups of eight. Assign each group two adult mentors. Instruct the adults to find ways to connect with those teens over the course of the year (phone calls, e-mail, personal notes, get-togethers, meeting at church, etc.).
- “Breakfast with Father”—Sponsor a pancake breakfast for small groups of youth at the rectory. Provide the young people with the opportunity to share their dreams and hopes.
- Develop a post-confirmation role in the parish and its ministries for each young person.
- Develop a parish home page on the web with areas of special interest for young people.

**Justice and Service**

- Develop education programs for young people to explore important justice issues that affect their lives and their world.
- Sponsor a Thanksgiving scavenger hunt to collect food for food pantries or families in need in your community.
- Develop a youth service group for young people interested in community service.
- Develop relationships with service organizations in your areas that involve youth and their families in service. Consider Habitat for Humanity, local food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters.
- Develop an adopt-a-grandparent program. Invite and prepare teens to visit with an elderly person on a regular basis.
- Organize a group of young people to participate in a summer weeklong service program.
- Identify the adults in the parish who are already involved in justice and service work in the community and find ways to connect young people with these adults. Adults already engaged in justice and service work can serve as mentors for young people the work and involve young people in the work they are already doing.
Leadership Development

- Develop a peer ministry leadership group.
- Invite youth to serve on parish councils and committees. Prepare the adults on those committees to work with young people.
- Develop a link with scouting (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Boys & Girls) in your area.
- Sponsor and give scholarships to the young people in your parish to attend leadership training programs.
- Have a special sign-up table at your parish ministry fair with listings of youth leadership positions that match with adolescent’s gifts and energy.
- Sponsor a day of reflection for youth called to leadership in the community (student councils, leadership in clubs, scouting, etc.).
- For Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, plan a program of prayer and reflection for youth leaders on the issues of leadership and service.

Pastoral Care

- Develop programs designed to aid youth in the formation of planning, decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution skills.
- Sponsor a self-esteem awareness workshop.
- Develop a list of recommended counselors in the community who would be helpful to youth and families in need of counseling.
- Sponsor a breakfast study club that brings young people together to study with peers and tutors.
- Sponsor a book club for youth, similar to Oprah’s book club. Have young people write reviews of their favorite books. Provide incentives for reading for pleasure.
- Develop a network of adult mentors who will connect with, support, and be available to youth.
- Develop peer discussion groups to support adolescents experiencing divorce, separation, death of a parent, etc.

Prayer and Worship

- Invite youth to participate as liturgical ministers (lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters).
- Develop a youth choir or invite youth to join the parish choir.
- Celebrate rituals and blessings at liturgy or other times that mark the special moments in teen’s lives such as getting your driver’s license, homecoming, prom, graduation, etc.
- Invite adolescents to become prayer partners for young parishioners preparing for First Communion.
- Invite youth to become involved in preparing the parish liturgy environment. Through this involvement, youth can be part of the planning for and decorating of the church for different liturgical seasons.
- Sponsor a retreat for adolescents on personal prayer. Provide a “How to Pray” guide for each youth.
- Develop a guide for celebrating Advent and Lent at home.
- Involve youth in preparing and leading prayer services and liturgical experiences such as a “Living Stations of the Cross.”
Planning a Season of Ministry

**Step 1:**
Divide a sheet of newsprint into four areas. Designate one of the following titles for each square: Youth, Family, Parish, Community. As a group, focus on the particular three-month period you are planning—Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer. Focus on the following questions:

- What is going on in the lives of youth in this season?
- What is going on in families in this season?
- What is happening at the parish and the Church during this season?
- What is happening in our community, diocese, and nation during this season?

Brainstorm the answers to these questions and post them on the newsprint in the appropriate box. Remember to think about the different cultures that make up your parish.

This will immerse you in the season that you are planning and help you recognize opportunities for ministry.

Then, look over the list and circle anything that you want to plan around, meaning either

- Plan to avoid something because of scheduling conflicts, or
- Plan to highlight because it is happening in the lives of the youth/families.

(For example, we can avoid scheduling during exam times, but we can also do a special blessing of students at Masses on the Sunday before exam week.)

Looking over the entire list of ideas, does a theme or a focus for the season immerse? If it does, add it to the top of the newsprint sheet.

(For example, Lent might call us to service, or spring might call us towards change and transition.)

**Step 2:**
Divide participants into teams of 2-3 people. Look through your available resources for ideas that seem appropriate and effective for this particular season, drawing connections to the activities, celebrations, and events listed in the previous step. This list might also include “youth ministry traditions” that happen during this season. Brainstorm for about five minutes.

Look at “Comprehensive Youth Ministry” on pages 4-5. Take another five minutes to review the goals and each of the components and add any additional ideas to your lists that match with components that you might have missed. If stumped, look at the program ideas on pages 15-17. (It isn’t essential to have an idea for each of the components.)

Re-gather as a team and report on your work. Collect the program ideas and strategies on newsprint. If the idea is connected with the specific date or event, include that information. Once all groups have reported, give everyone a moment to look over the list, and add to it anything that seems to be missing.
Not every brainstormed activity must be designed for “everyone.” Some programs, events, and strategies may be directed at a specific segment of the youth population (i.e., a retreat for incoming freshmen or graduating seniors). If you have not brainstormed ideas for these “niche” groups, add anything to the newsprints that will help round-out your offerings. At this point in the process, you will have many more ideas than you will be able to use.

**Step 3:** Give each member of the team a marker. Each person should select the 10 programs or strategies that you believe will be most effective during this season. If you only offer a few programs a month, you might want to reduce this number to 5. After everyone is done, look over the list, and select some key programs or strategies that you wish to be a part of the season. Write each of these programs/strategies on a sticky note.

**Step 4:** Post the three calendars on a wall that everyone in the group can see. If you already have a pattern of regular youth gatherings (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly), highlight those dates. On the appropriate dates on the calendar, write in the programs, activities, and events that are already scheduled commitments (i.e., a retreat, parish Lenten reconciliation service, etc.). This serves as a starting point for your planning.

**Step 5:** Working together, place the sticky notes on appropriate days on the calendar. If you have a regularly scheduled youth gathering, begin with these dates, deciding on the program focus for your gatherings, and then extending out to other programs that you wish to offer. Write non-gathered strategies on the month when they will take place (or on a specific date, if appropriate).

**Step 6:** Review each month. If there is too much or too little in a particular month, or throughout the whole season, make any adjustments needed.

**Step 7:** As a team, review and evaluate your plan for this season and your calendar.
- Does this season match with our purpose and goals for youth ministry? Does it address a variety of the components of youth ministry?
- Do we have a regular pattern of gathering (or more than one)?
- Do we have special events and ways for youth to grow deeper?
- Is catechesis a part of our plan?
- Are we connecting with families of youth?
- Are there opportunities for youth involvement and leadership in the parish?
- Does the plan for this season provide for a good balance of gathered and non-gathered programs and strategies?
- Does this season consider the lives of youth and their families during these months?
- Does this season include parish and community activities?

Make adjustments as needed based upon your observations. With these plans in place, you can work on developing the specifics for each program/strategy and developing leadership for these events.
Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.  
Bless them with your guiding grace  
as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,  
that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,  
that they may believe in themselves  
and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy  
that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow  
in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,  
in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,  
in the journey of faith we walk with them,  
in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content of the program</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handout Packet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of workshop</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Other comments:
Overview of Youth Ministry Workshop

Diocese of Helena
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Overview of Youth Ministry

This workshop helps parish leaders come to fuller understanding of comprehensive youth ministry as outlined in *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (USCCB, 1997). The workshop explores the ways that a parish can effectively minister to young people within the context of the parish, but including the family and wider community.

*Sharing the Vision* - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Acknowledgement

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Opening Prayer

Gather
Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for gathering us here tonight. Be with us, help us, fill us with your Spirit. Amen.

Listen
1 Timothy 4:12-16

Respond
Response: Open our eyes
- Open our eyes Lord to the young people in our parish filled with the Holy Spirit. Response.
- Open our eyes Lord to the young people in our parish who struggle to find God. Response.
- Open our eyes Lord to the families of young people, in all their strengths and weaknesses. Response.
- Open our eyes Lord to the young people in our community who have no one and who need love, support, and faith in their lives. Response.

Response: Help us to grow
- Loving God, help us to grow in faith, hope, and joy so that our faith community can reflect the goodness of God. Response.
- Loving God, help us to grow in our response to the needs of all the members of our community. Response.
- Loving God, help us to grow in our ability to meet the needs of the young people in our community. Response.
- Loving God, help us to grow as people committed to the Gospel message. Response.

Send Forth
Give us strength, O Lord, to be a parish community that can meet the needs of all of our members. Help us tonight to open our hearts and minds specifically to the young people of this parish. May we find ways to share your love with our youth, to engage them in the gospel message, and meet their needs. We trust in your guidance tonight and ask for your blessing on our work. Amen.
An Overview of Youth Ministry

Definition of Catholic Youth Ministry

“Youth Ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.”


Three Goals of Catholic Youth Ministry

Goal 1: Empowerment
To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. (RTV, p. 9)

- Present the Good News
- Relationship with Jesus
- Call to discipleship
- Provide for catechesis
- Explore vocations

Goal 2: Participation
To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. (RTV, p. 11)

Four Faith Communities
- Family
- Parish
- Catholic Schools
- Youth Serving Organizations

Goal 3: Growth
To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. (RTV, p. 15)

- Aim: “healthy, competent, caring and faith filled youth”
- Address spiritual needs in context of life
- Ministry fosters:
  - Healthy adolescent development
  - Discipleship
  - Catholic identity
Settings for Youth Ministry

There are four settings where youth can be ministered to:

- **Youth** in context, as gifted and growing
- **Families** as domestic church, as central and capable
- **Parish** as a responsible, resourceful community
- **Wider Community** as collaborators and resources

Youth Setting:
- Respond to young (11-15) and older (15-18) adolescents
- Create diverse starting points and paths to involvement
- Encourage involvement by interest / gift / need
- Think ministry with “each youth” in the parish

Family Setting:
- Support with resources and programs
  - at-home / for parents / as family
- Think about families as we plan for parish life
  - consider the impact on families
- Build a bridge between parish programs and home

Parish Setting:
- Promote a common vision for ministry with youth
- Involve youth in planning and leading
- Connect ministries and organizations to youth
- Engage the whole community

Wider Community Setting:
- Connect youth and their families to community resources
- Partner and collaborate with other congregations and youth agencies
- Participate in community efforts
- Link youth to service and leadership
- Use the parish community to access
Becoming a Youth Friendly Parish Community

The Catholic Bishops of the United States call parishes to become ‘youth-friendly’ communities in which youth have a conspicuous presence” (RTV, p. 13). These communities have the following characteristics:

Value youth
- makes youth feel welcome
- listens to youth
- responds to their needs with age appropriate programming
- supports youth with prayer, time, facilities, and money

See youth as resources
- empowers gifts of youth
- provides meaningful roles for youth in the community
- acknowledge and affirm their efforts and contributions

Provides for intergenerational relationships
- connects youth to role models and mentors
- includes youth in the life of the parish: prayer, learning, serving, and celebrating

See page 13 for one parish’s idea on how to engage the whole parish in taking a role within youth ministry. This was developed by St. Clare Parish in O’Fallon, Illinois.
Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry
The components describe specific areas of the mission of the Church that work together to provide ministry with adolescents. “These components provide a framework for the Catholic community to respond to the needs of young people and to involve young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community”

Renewing the Vision, p. 26

Advocacy
Interpreting the need of young people, standing up for young people, both as individuals and as a youth community.

Catechesis
Deepening the faith of young people through teaching and reflection—working towards transformation.

Community Life
Building community, not just between young people, but with their families and engaging youth in the broader parish community.

Evangelization
Proclaiming the Good News and inviting youth into relationship with Jesus Christ through ongoing witness.

Justice and Service
Engaging young people in helping and serving other people, and understanding the Gospel call to justice through education and reflection.

Leadership Development
Inviting, training, and supporting adults and young people into leadership for youth ministry and with the broader parish community.

Pastoral Care
Providing prevention programs for youth and families, caring for those in crisis, and providing guidance during times of decisions and moral choices.

Prayer and Worship
Helping youth to develop an individual prayer life, experience a variety of communal prayers, and involving youth in the sacramental life of the Church.
Flexible and Adaptable Programming

“The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing ministry programming for adolescents:

• a diversity of program settings
• age-specific programs for young and older adolescents
• family-centered programs for the entire family, for parents, for foster parents, for grandparents raising children, adolescents
• intergenerational parish programs
• community-wide programs
• a balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of comprehensive ministry…
• a variety of approaches to reach all adolescents and their families, including parish, school, and community-wide programs
• small-group programs and small ecclesial community experiences
• home-based programs, activities, and resources
• one-on-one and mentoring programs and activities
• independent or self-directed programs
• a variety of scheduling options and program settings to respond to the reality of the busy lives and commitments of adolescents and their families
• use of current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation” (RTV, p. 25).
• non-gathered strategies (birthday cards, study kits, newsletters, bulletin boards celebrating youth accomplishments, etc.)
Individual Reflection

Take a few minutes to review “Putting the Framework Together” and then answer the questions below.

Putting the Framework Together

Together, the definition, goals, themes, components, and settings provide a framework for developing our unique response as a parish community. This framework provides a guide for developing comprehensive ministry and is designed to...

- utilize each of the Church’s ministries—advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship—in an integrated approach to achieving the three goals for ministry with adolescents;
- provide developmentally appropriate programs and activities that promote personal and spiritual growth for young and older adolescents;
- enrich family life and promote the faith growth of families of adolescents;
- incorporate young people fully into all aspects of church life and engage them in ministry and leadership in the faith community;
- create partnerships among families, schools, churches, and community organizations in a common effort to promote positive youth development” (RTV, p. 20).

What part of this new vision for youth ministry has you excited and energized?

Why is it important to implement comprehensive youth ministry in your parish?

What is the biggest challenge for your parish in implementing comprehensive youth ministry?

Developing a Youth Ministry Mindset

### Older Approaches

- Program is made up of many seemingly unrelated activities without a clear mission or purpose.
- It is often unclear what to do in the program that will make a difference in youth’s lives.
- The focus is primarily on youth-to-youth relationships.
- Children and youth in the congregation are the responsibility of the youth leader, volunteers, and parents.
- Parents are only superficially involved in the youth program.
- Energy is consumed by reacting to youth problems after they occur.
- The focus is almost exclusively on building the congregation’s own youth program.
- The youth worker is primarily a program leader, planner, and mentor for youth in the congregation.

**Focus:** The emphasis is on gathered youth-only programs at the parish, often focused on a single group.

### A Comprehensive Approach

- The comprehensive model helps to integrate diverse activities into a larger framework that is goal-directed.
- The comprehensive model gives concrete things the congregation can do to make a lasting difference for youth.
- The focus broadens from youth-only to building intergenerational community.
- Everyone in the congregation recognizes his or her responsibility for children and youth – and his or her power to promote their faith growth.
- Parents are active partners in the youth ministry through family activities at home and in the parish, and through parent education.
- Energy is put into nurturing skills and values that help to avoid problems before they start.
- Congregations become committed to cooperating with others in the community.
- The youth minister also serves as a community organizer, networker, and voice for youth in the community.

**Focus:** The emphasis is on positive youth development and the parish community as a rich resource. There is a variety of approaches and programs to address the needs of youth and families.

(From *Youth Ministry Training Videos: An Adult Learning Resource. Training Manual* by Center for Ministry Development. Published by Family Theater Productions, Inc., 1996, p. 28.)
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
   Bless them with your guiding grace
as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
   that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
   that they may believe in themselves
and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
   that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
   in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
in the journey of faith we walk with them,
in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship
in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Saint Clare Youth Commission Presents
Fifty One-Time Ways to Celebrate Youth

We want to give the entire parish an opportunity to encourage and support our youth. That is what “Celebrate Youth” is all about. Now here is your chance! The Saint Clare Youth Commission is encouraging you to circle one of these activities and hand in your response. Enrolling in one of these one-shot activities in no way obligates you to additional responsibility. We will also make sure you are at least with one other adult if you are directly interacting with youth.

1. Encourage one youth to attend Mass
2. One-time bulletin board set-up
3. Type up youth schedule for one season
4. Graduation cards for the month of May
5. One mailing of birthday cards for one month
6. Setup and serve youth for a youth group meeting
7. Accompany youth to a Cardinal Baseball Game
8. Accompany youth during a Scavenger Hunt
9. Accompany youth to the soup kitchen
10. Accompany youth to the nursing home
11. Buy Pumpkins for the Hay Ride (Paid by youth funds)
12. Invite a youth to shadow your church ministry (one time)
13. Work with youth to make care packages for college students
14. Participate in Gym Night (one time)
15. Teach one time a special youth lesson on one of the Catholic Social Teachings
16. Participate in married couples testimony night
17. Phone youth for a special event (one time)
18. Set up appreciation dinner for youth volunteers
19. Participate in opening your home for a youth progressive dinner night
20. Be a table monitor for Confirmation (one Sunday night—no preparation necessary)
21. Provide refreshments for youth group (one time)
22. Talk about your church ministry to the youth
23. Take pictures for one youth activity
24. Encourage one youth you now to take a leadership role as a lector, Eucharistic minister, usher, or greeter
25. Write thank you notes to youth for one of the leadership roles
26. Participate as a helper in a youth fund-raiser
27. Participate in one youth seasonal planning meeting
28. Create a catchy flyer for one seasonal planning season
29. Accompany youth to rake leaves for the elderly
30. Accompany youth to remove snow for the elderly
31. Video interview for a youth lesson
32. Teach youth how to hammer for Habitat for Humanity trip
33. Participate in a youth volleyball game
34. Provide One Object lesson
35. Accompany youth to Saint Louis Children’s Hospital (one time)
36. Plan scavenger hunt for the youth
37. Attend a high school football game with a special “Saint Clare Support Youth” t-shirt
38. Act as a baby sitter for youth-parent sponsored event
39. Decorate the youth room to make it more youth friendly
40. Donate used furniture, games, and decorations to the youth room
41. Participate in 7th and 8th grade Center Field Park day
42. Participate in the parish cleanup with youth
43. Play a guitar one time for the youth
44. Play the keyboard one time for the youth
45. Participate in an Ice Cream Social for our youth
46. Attend "Learn More about the Youth Commission" meeting
47. Help organize one Celebrate Youth activity
48. Write a special word of encouragement for one Confirmation candidate
49. Allow one youth to accompany you to Mass
50. Treat two youth to a night at McDonalds (need at least two adults with the youth)

Name_________________________________________ Approximate age____________________
Phone Numbers ______________________________________________________________________________
Email address_________________________________________________________________________________

Overview of Youth Ministry Workshop
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Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training workshop?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Organizing a Team for Youth Ministry

This workshop helps parish leaders create a leadership structure for youth ministry that includes youth and adults. The workshop explores the need for a variety of leaders and the reasons why different roles are necessary and helpful in sustaining youth ministry over many years.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

*Listen*

The Long View, *A Prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero*

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, 
It is even beyond our vision. 
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of 
The magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. 
Nothing we do is complete, 
Which is another way of saying that 
The Kingdom always lies beyond us. 

No statement says all that should be said. 
No prayer fully expresses our faith. 
No confession brings perfection, 
No pastoral visit brings wholeness. 
No program accomplishes the church’s mission. 
No set of goals and objectives includes everything. 

This is what we are about. 
We plant the seeds that one day will grow. 
We water seeds already planted, 
Knowing that they hold future promise. 
We lay foundations that will need further development. 
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities. 

We cannot do everything, 
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. 
This enables us to do something, 
And to do it very well. 
It may be incomplete, 
But it is a beginning, 
A step along the way, 
An opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter 
And do the rest. 

We may never see the end results, 
But that is the difference 
Between the master builder and the worker. 

We are workers, not master builders, 
Ministers, not messiahs. 
We are prophets of a future that is not our own.
**Respond**
Praying for Patience

All: *Help us be patient Lord…*
- when things don’t go as quickly as we dreamed.
- when others take a little longer to see the vision of your Kingdom.
- when we are unable to be perfect and we stumble.

All: *We ask your help Lord…*
- in speaking your truth to those who can make a difference in our ministry.
- in knowing and naming our own gifts for your use.
- in creating a ministry that will serve your young people well.

All: *Lord, bless our time together…*
- may we learn and grow in mutual trust.
- develop a stronger youth ministry in our parish.
- honor the many gifts you have given our community.

**Send Forth**
Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord.
The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth,
being patient with it until it received the early and the late rains.
You also must be patient.
(James 5:7)
A Leadership Structure for Youth Ministry

“Part of the vision of youth ministry is to present to youth the richness of the person of Christ, which perhaps exceeds the ability of one person to capture, but which might be effected by the collective ministry of the many persons who make up the church.”


Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Every parish needs someone to coordinate youth ministry, although this is not always a paid position. The coordinator has primary responsibility for

- planning
- administration
- developing a leadership system
- advocating for youth.

Each of these roles benefits the parish in unique ways.

- Planning (in collaboration with the coordinating team) ensures a well-rounded and solid youth ministry effort.
- Administration ensures the safety of the young people and volunteers, as well as the information the youth and their families need for participation.
- Developing a leadership system ensures that the abundance of the community is poured out in service to our young people.
- Advocacy ensures that young people are represented and heard within the parish and wider community. Advocacy also ensures that young people are fully engage in all the ministries of the parish.

If no one serves in the role of Ministry Coordinator, it is easy for many of these tasks to remain undone. Too often we ask people who are fully engaged as program leaders to also serve in the role of ministry coordinator. This is very difficult because the coordination of youth ministry asks for different gifts and focused time—which isn’t always possible when the demands of running a specific program or many different programs have the individual already fully subscribed. When we name someone as the Ministry Coordinator for youth ministry, we should be clear about our expectations for their work, and free them from other youth ministry commitments to create time for other important tasks. If the person is hired, we should ensure that they are already well prepared for the role, or take immediate steps to provide for that training.
Coordinating Team

Renewing the Vision defines the coordinating team in this way: “A Coordinating Team, made up of adult and young people, may be formed to work with the ministry coordinator in organizing a comprehensive ministry with adolescents, by planning the overall ministry, developing a leadership team, identifying the resources of the faith community, and connecting the ministry with the other ministries and programs of the faith community” (p. 41). See the article, “Youth Ministry: It Takes a Team,” for a full understanding of the roles of Coordinator and Coordinating Team (pp. 17-24).

Program Leaders

Program leaders are responsible for developing, promoting, implementing, and evaluating specific programs within youth ministry. For each and every program, try to create a team to coordinator that event. To make sure that your ministry is always expanding, ensure that there are some new people on each team—youth and adults—every time you do something. If you are doing a movie night, ask a youth and adult to coordinate the event. They are in charge! If you are doing a weekend retreat, you will need a much larger team. When you are taking the young people to the homeless shelter, find the adults in the parish who already volunteer there, and invite them to help prepare your young people for the experience and accompany them to the shelter. You will probably want to have a few adults who are the “regulars” that go to many programs and know the young people well.

Support Staff

There are always behind-the-scene roles that keep any ministry going. In youth ministry, these roles are often referred to as support roles, and could include helping with paperwork, phone calls, website design, desktop publishing, or finances. It might involve baking, shopping for supplies, and cutting out stars for this week’s activity. Also included in this category are the people who volunteer to drive to an event, or chaperone the overnight hours of a retreat, or are otherwise helpful to an event. Support can include prayer support, monetary support, and physical help. Support roles are great ways for people to make a contribution to youth ministry (and they don’t need to go through a background check to bake brownies for the retreat!).

See the article “Youth Ministry: It Takes a Team” (pp. 9-24) for additional information on the Leadership Structure for Youth Ministry.
Leadership Structure for Youth Ministry

Coordinator and Coordinating Team

Retreat
Retreat Master and Team

Religious Ed.
Coordinator and Catechists

Boy Scouts
Girl Scouts
Scout Leaders

Six Flags Trip
Program Leader

Newsletter
“Editor”

Birthday Cards
Writer and Sender

Weekly
Youth Group
Coordinator and Team

Lenten Prayer
Group Leader

Spanish-Language
Youth Choir
Director and Team

Support Staff could support either the Coordinator and Team (mailing, database support, publicity, etc.) or a Program (bakers for youth group gatherings, drivers for Six Flags, shoppers for religious education, etc.).

Organizing a Team for Youth Ministry
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A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
Bless them with your guiding grace
as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
that they may believe in themselves
and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
in the journey of faith we walk with them,
in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship
in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Youth Ministry: 
it Takes a Team

By Ann Marie Eckert

It Takes a Village to Raise a Child
In *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, the U.S. bishops borrowed from this Ghanaian proverb and stated: “Comprehensive Ministry with Adolescents—It Takes a Whole Church” (p. 19). The Bishops wisely recognize that youth ministry cannot happen fully if only one or two adults in the parish community are involved in youth ministry. Youth ministry must involve a wide variety of adults and youth in a wide variety of leadership roles. Key to that understanding is the Coordinating Team for youth ministry—a team that sets the direction, advocates for youth in the parish and wider community, and plans the parish’s youth ministry efforts.

Community is Central
In defining youth ministry, the U.S. Bishops begin with the Christian community.

> “Three interdependent and equally important goals guide the Church’s ministry with adolescents. These goals state what it means for the Catholic community to respond to the needs of young people and to involve young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community” (*Renewing the Vision*, p. 9).

Community is central to youth ministry—and not just in the way we often think. Community among youth has always been a central element of youth ministry, but we now understand that community also means that we use all of the gifts of our parish community to serve the needs of our young people (and all of the people of the community).

Embedded in Scripture and Church teaching is the understanding that all Christians have gifts for ministry and that there is mutuality to those gifts—complementary gifts, given by the Holy Spirit, for the common good of all.

> “Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist, every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church’s mission of salvation in the world. Moreover, in those same sacraments, the Holy Spirit pours out gifts which make it possible for every Christian man and woman to assume different ministries and forms of service that complement one another and are for the good of all” (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 20).
As Catholics, we need to take that call to community (for the good of all) very seriously if we want our youth ministry efforts to be an authentic witness to Jesus’ life and ministry. Jesus, God’s own son, did not act alone. He purposefully invited others to share in his ministry, invested time and energy into building up his team of disciples, engaged others who had gifts to share, and constantly found ways to involve people in his work. Jesus could have acted alone, but where would we be now if he had?

Part of the mystery of God’s great love for us is that he made each of us with gifts to share. Saint Paul helps us understand this abundance of gifts when he speaks of the Christian community as being the body of Christ. Paul says that every part of the body is important and that they must all work together. No part of the body is more important, and no part can say to the rest, “I don’t need you” (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

If you look at the miracle of Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand, one of the central elements of that story is that Jesus did not act alone. He used the gifts that were already present within the gathered masses, and invited them to share from their abundance. In reflecting on this reading, Parker Palmer states: “He acted in concert with others and evoked the abundance of community” (The Active Life: Wisdom for Work, Creativity, and Caring, p. 136). Palmer goes on to speak of Jesus’ leadership:

“Jesus exercises the only kind of leadership that can evoke authentic community—a leadership that risks failure (and even crucifixion) by making space for other people to act. When a leader takes up all the space and preempts all the action, he or she may make something happen, but that something is not community. Nor is it abundance, because the leader is only one person and that one person’s resources invariably run out. But when a leader is willing to trust the abundance that people have and can generate together, willing to take the risk of inviting people to share from that abundance, then and only then may true community emerge” (p. 138).

If young people are to understand what it means to be gifted from God, called to share those gifts in service to others, and to live in community, then they will learn that (or not) from the ways in which they experience Church. Youth ministry should communicate in word and action to our young people and larger parish community—“we are so abundantly blessed by our God.” When a few leaders have to do everything, when those leaders are stressed and running low, and when only those individual’s gifts are made known to youth, our young people will not come to know the abundance of gifts within the community nor what true community looks and feels like.

**Tapping into the Abundance**
Youth ministry is at its best when enough time and energy is given to building a team of people who each add their own special gifts to the ministry effort. Some may have
one specific event to which they devote their time. Others may help occasionally — when there is a need. Others are weekly or monthly volunteers—the cornerstone of most youth ministry efforts. Others support youth ministry with money, or resources, or prayer. There is one last group of people who share their gifts within youth ministry by making up a very important team within youth ministry—the Coordinating Team. All of these individuals are exercising important and life-giving ministry within the parish community — and demonstrating how abundantly blessed we are.

There are readers who are agreeing with all that has been said thus far, but who are asking with an open mind and a troubled heart, “But how do I get these volunteers?” This is the question asked by thousands of burned-out parish volunteers throughout the country and in some ways it is the wrong question. It is the wrong question because it is usually asked by people who are desperate to share the burdens of volunteering with others who are “stupid” enough to say “yes” like they, themselves, did long ago.

The right question might be, “How do I help people understand their own giftedness and create opportunities for those people to live out their baptismal call?” It sounds like a bit of a mouthful, but when our efforts are focused on helping Catholic Christians respond to the great gift of God’s love in their lives, we will find the abundance of ministers that we are seeking. When we spend our time trying to find volunteers, it can be a fruitless and discouraging endeavor. Marlene Wilson, in her book, How to Mobilize Church Volunteers, rightly states that “the pews are filled with potential unrealized and energy untapped” (p. 21).

Wilson speaks about the reasons why so few people are involved in Church ministry. Among the reasons she states are:

• Most volunteer ministry jobs in the church are not clearly defined.
• Tradition often squelches new and creative ideas and approaches.
• Time and talent sheets have helped officially reject people’s gifts every year.
• Clergy and lay leaders alike often are very poor delegators.
• The jobs to be filled often receive more attention than the people filling them.
• It is often difficult for members to describe
  → what they are good at.
  → what they are tired of doing.
  → what they don’t like to do.
  → what they want to learn.
  → where they are being led to grow.
  → when they need a sabbatical (p. 22).

I would add the following…

• Most Christians aren’t invited to name their own experience of God and then act from it.
For each of those concerns, there is a solution. There are ways in which a parish community can truly tap into the potential that exists in each of us and uncover the abundance lying very near the surface of their parish community. But it will take some new ways of acting, new ways of thinking, and a community-wide leadership effort to be truly successful.

**Mobilizing the Christian Community**

There are solutions to the problems stated above. They take time, energy, and a clear vision of what it means to be church. If we want more people engaged in ministry at the parish (including, obviously, youth ministry), we need to attend to the following:

- **Clearly define leadership roles.**
  Don’t ask people if they can help in youth ministry. It is too big, ominous, and vague to get a positive response. When looking for ministry volunteers, write up job descriptions. Tell people what the job will entail, how much time it should take, how you will prepare them for the work, and what the rewards will be. Make the jobs small. One person doesn’t need to be responsible for 10 parts of the big event. Break up jobs so that people can give a few hours, or a few days to youth ministry and contribute to an overall event.

- **Help people to use their gifts.**
  Not everyone will be good at up-front roles. Not everyone can cook for the retreat. Not everyone can manage the youth ministry finances and have the checkbook balance at the end of the month. People have different gifts. Find out what people’s gifts are and then invite them to use their own special talents to benefit others. But this means really getting to know the community—which will take time, energy, and attention. It is worth it!

- **Let people be.**
  William Easum wrote a compelling book called *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers*. The title alone tells you what he thinks about tradition for tradition’s sake. His subtitle, however, tells you how he thinks Church should work: “Ministry anytime, anywhere, by anyone.” Too often the traditional ways of doing things at a parish are not the ways a new leader might proceed, so the individual doesn’t offer his or her gifts, or those gifts are not appreciated if offered. Parishes need to be open to the new and creative ways that people are called to share their gifts. It may open up new ministry offerings at the parish, or it might change the way things have been traditionally done. If it is faithful, healthy, and authentic ministry, then we should embrace change and celebrate the movement of the spirit within the community.

- **Find new ways of inviting people to share their gifts.**
  Too often time and talent surveys (or new parishioner packets) are full of requests for help that never get acted on. Don’t hand it out unless you are prepared to invite
and use the help that is offered. Another problem with most surveys is that it asks people to tell you how they want to volunteer within existing ministry efforts, but never gives the individual the chance to name their gifts, passions, experiences, and desires for involvement. Create a new time and talent survey for use at the parish that helps the individuals to express the gifts that they have been given, and name the ways they might be willing to use them within the Christian community. Then take those surveys and find ways to use those gifts within all the different ministries of the parish. Within youth ministry, invite current and new volunteers to tell you more about themselves. You might find the perfect person to direct the Stations of the Cross, or teach the youth how to quilt, or someone who can create great looking publicity for youth ministry.

• **Delegate!**
  To be a ministry leader is by definition to be an empowerer. To empower someone is to give them the help, direction, and support that they need to succeed. Too many ministry leaders believe that their role is to make the ministry happen—with or without help. If you are a leader of youth ministry, a part of your job is to help other adults and youth to take on leadership within the community, uncover their own gifts, and develop new skills. When we hold on tightly to jobs or believe that others lack the experience or skill that we possess, we can never become good delegators. We will never hold on to ministry volunteers if they do not feel like they are able to make a substantial contribution to the ministry, and that will never happen if we hold on to all the decision making and important jobs. Share the jobs—and take the risk of failure.

• **Pay attention to ministry volunteers.**
  There are times when we just really need someone to drive youth to the movie night. It is easy to be so happy to finally find someone to drive, that we forget that the person who said “yes” left their home, family, and other responsibilities to be a part of the event. It is easy to downplay the sacrifice of a volunteer driver when we think about all that we give up on a regular basis to do youth ministry events, but it does not, in fact, negate that driver’s sacrifice. If we want people to invest in the ministry that we love and value, we have to value the service that others offer to us, and value the volunteers as individuals. When we pay attention to them—thank them, get to know them, recognize their gifts—we are more likely to encourage their continued involvement.

• **Help the Catholic community value their baptismal call.**
  It is hard to tap into people’s baptismal call if those same people do not believe that baptism is a call. As a Catholic community, we need to invest more time and energy in helping the “average pew-sitter” to know that they are called to ministry. Don’t confuse this message, however, and assume that this means that all Catholics are called to give a certain number of hours of volunteer service at the Church. Many a
good Catholic gives their service to the community, their family, and their workplace. This is good and holy work. However, all Catholics should be expected to work for the common good of all—and this can often be done through ministry within the parish. We need to highlight, celebrate, and affirm all the ways that Catholics build up the community, share their faith, and work towards the common good if we expect Catholics to know that this is a part of their mission in life. It is hard to be a “pew-sitter” when all around you are people actively engaged in ministry. But when only a few people have all the leadership roles within the parish, it is easy to believe that only certain people are called to ministry.

- **Let no job be a life-sentence.**

Sometimes people volunteer at the parish and then keep the job for the next 30 years! Although we value the person who gives us 30 years of service, what that essentially says to the rest of the parish is two things:

  ➔ Volunteering is a life-sentence.
  ➔ There is no need for me—because the job is already taken.

Make all volunteer jobs have a start and stop date. I am not selected as the head of the youth ministry coordinating team for life—just for 2 years. And the person who had the job before me is going to help me through my first year, and the person who will replace me will shadow me during my second year. When jobs are seen as being continuous, it discourages people from participating. If someone wants to volunteer in youth ministry for the next 30 years, that is wonderful. But during that time they will have 100 different jobs, learn tons of new things, and move in and out of up-front leadership roles. That will be good for the ministry and the volunteer!

If you are not in a position to change the whole structure of the parish but you still need volunteer ministers for youth ministry, here are some very practical ways to proceed:

  ➔ Divide jobs into manageable pieces
  ➔ Write job descriptions for those roles—a couple of sentences at least—so that people will have a clear understanding of what is expected.
  ➔ Ask people (youth, parents, other volunteers, and parish staff) for recommendations, and make sure you move outside of the people you know to engage a whole new group of people in youth ministry.
  ➔ Interview potential volunteers about their interests, experiences, gifts, lives (over coffee, at the back of church, or in a more official way).
  ➔ Invite individuals, who will be long-term volunteers, to fill out an application, submit to a background check, and attend safe environment training.
  ➔ Share with potential volunteers the joys of youth ministry and the ways that they will grow through their involvement.
  ➔ Never stop looking for new people, and when you find someone, invite them personally.
Mentor new leaders into their positions—don’t just throw them into roles they are unprepared to handle well.

A Variety of Roles
As stated earlier, there are a variety of ways that adults and youth can contribute to the overall youth ministry efforts of a parish. In *Renewing the Vision*, the U.S. Bishops highlight four unique roles within youth ministry:

- Ministry Coordinator
- Coordinating Team
- Program Leaders
- Support Staff

Let’s look at each of these important ministry roles:

- **Support Staff**
  Did you know that there is someone at your parish who cleans the linens, polishes the candlesticks, and collects the lost mittens and umbrellas after Mass? There are always behind-the-scene roles that keep any ministry going. In youth ministry, these roles are often referred to as support roles, and could include helping with paperwork, phone calls, website design, desktop publishing, or finances. It might involve baking, shopping for supplies, and cutting out stars for this week’s activity. Also included in this category are the people who volunteer to drive to an event, or chaperone the over-night hours of a retreat, or are otherwise helpful to an event. Support can include prayer support, monetary support, and physical help. Too often in youth ministry the leaders never ask for this type of help, so they spend too many of their volunteer hours shopping, calling, or designing publicity, leaving them stressed during the time they spend with youth. There is no job that someone isn’t able to do, and would probably be happy to do. You just have to find them and then ask them. The reason most often given for why people don’t volunteer is, “I have never been asked.” Support roles are great ways for people to make a contribution to youth ministry (and they don’t need to go through a background check to bake brownies for the retreat!).

- **Program Leaders**
  Every program has leaders. In too many parishes, the program leaders for all the events are the same four or five people. Once they say yes to helping with one thing, it is assumed that they are willing to be leaders for every program that youth ministry is doing. It is far better to get a variety of people involved in many different programs. This allows young people to get to know a variety of Catholic Christians, and frees people up so that they can enter into ministry efforts with less stress and more joy. Program leaders are responsible for developing, promoting, implementing, and evaluating specific programs within youth ministry. For each and every program, try to create a team that has some new people on it—youth and
adults. If you are doing a movie night, ask a youth and adult to coordinate the event. They are in charge! If you are doing a weekend retreat, you will need a much larger team, but make sure it includes some new people. When you are taking the young people to the homeless shelter, find the adults in the parish who already volunteer there, and invite them to help prepare your young people for the experience and accompany them to the shelter. You will probably want to have a few adults who are the “regulars” that go to many programs and know the young people well—but that doesn’t mean that there can’t be new people involved.

**Coordinating Team**

*Renewing the Vision* defines the coordinating team in this way: “A Coordinating Team, made up of adult and young people, may be formed to work with the ministry coordinator in organizing a comprehensive ministry with adolescents, by planning the overall ministry, developing a leadership team, identifying the resources of the faith community, and connecting the ministry with the other ministries and programs of the faith community” (p. 41). More attention to this team is given below.

**Ministry Coordinator**

Every parish needs someone to coordinate youth ministry, although this is not always a paid position. The role is essential, however, because the coordinator has primary responsibility for planning, administration, developing a leadership system, and advocating for youth. Each of these roles benefits the parish in unique ways. Planning (in collaboration with the coordinating team) ensures a well-rounded and solid youth ministry effort. Administration ensures the safety of the young people and volunteers, as well as the information the youth and their families need for participation. Developing a leadership system ensures that the abundance of the community is poured out in service to our young people. And finally, advocacy ensures that young people are represented and heard within the parish and wider community. Advocacy also ensures that young people are fully engage in all the ministries of the parish.

If no one serves in the role of Ministry Coordinator, it is easy for many of these tasks to remain undone. Too often we ask people who are fully engaged as program leaders to also serve in the role of ministry coordinator. This is very difficult because the coordination of youth ministry asks for different gifts and focused time—which isn’t always possible when the demands of running a specific program or many different programs have the individual already fully subscribed. As the bishops assert, “The Ministry Coordinator must always be qualified and well trained, as well as have an excellent reputation.” Too often we throw people into the role of coordinator who may have a great reputation and are hard-working, loving adults, but who lack the understanding of, or the training for, the role of coordinator. When we name someone as the Ministry Coordinator for youth ministry, we should be
clear about our expectations for their work, and free them from other youth
ministry commitments to create time for other important tasks. If the person is
hired, we should ensure that they are already well prepared for the role, or take
immediate steps to provide for that training.

The Role of the Coordinating Team
As stated above, the Coordinating Team is in charge of planning the overall ministry,
developing the leaders, getting the resources of the community involved, and
connecting youth ministry to the whole parish. This is not easily accomplished by one
or two individuals. It truly takes a group effort.

Specifically, the Coordinating Team should do the following, with additional parish-
specific duties added on:

Planning
1. Create and communicate the vision for all aspects of youth ministry at the parish.
2. Coordinate schedules and programs for youth ministry.
3. Assess the needs of the youth and parents, and make recommendations for new
   or revised ministry efforts.
4. Evaluate current efforts regularly.
(The specific plans for activities are handled by the program leaders. This team sets the
direction broadly and then counts on the program leaders to bring the plans to life.)

Leadership Development
5. Recommend and recruit program leaders and support staff for youth ministry.
6. Provide for training of youth ministry volunteers and staff.
7. Establishing (or updating) policies and procedures for youth ministry.

Resource Connectors
8. Make recommendations for resources, budget, and facilities.
9. Communicate with parish staff, parish council, and other leaders teams about
   youth ministry and the needs of youth.
10. Facilitate, when necessary, the finding of needed resources for youth ministry
    (time, talent, money, materials).

Connect Youth to Parish
11. Advocate for issues that affect youth in the parish and wider community.
12. Create avenues for youth involvement in parish events.

To perform at their highest level, the team should meet at least twice a season (every 3
months), but it is not necessary or effective to meet more than once a month. This team
should not be involved in the day-to-day workings of youth ministry and therefore can
leave planning meetings to the program leaders.
Putting the Team Together
In creating that group, look at a number of issues within the parish. If youth ministry is understood broadly in your parish, then youth ministry is the umbrella for all the ministry efforts directed at 6th-12th graders, including religious education, confirmation preparation, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, youth groups, choirs, efforts aimed at specific cultural/ethnic groups, and many other parish initiatives. If this list represents the fullness of your current youth ministry efforts, it will be important to ensure that all of these different ministries are somehow represented on the Coordinating Team. One of the biggest mistakes that we can make is to create a Coordinating Team that really only focuses on one area of our ministry, and ignores—or doesn’t take seriously—other efforts. For instance, if your Coordinating Team spends 90% of its time planning for a youth group (or Life Teen program, or religious education, etc.) and gives little or no attention to other youth events at the parish, it will be easy for the parish to assume that the Coordinating Team is really just a planning team for that particular program. In too many parishes across the country, the Coordinating Team is surprised to find out that some parishioners have started a Spanish-speaking youth group (or Boy Scout troop, or prayer group) without their knowledge. This situation highlights a problem in the parish. The problem is not that ministry is beginning without the Coordinating Team’s direction, because this is often a blessing. The problem might be that the Coordinating Team is not diverse enough to know that there was a need for a Spanish-speaking youth group in the parish. Or, perhaps, the problem might be that the Coordinating Team has not established themselves as working broadly within the parish to address the needs of all the young people, so the pastor (or parish council) do not think of them as truly coordinating all of youth ministry at the parish, but just one small part of an overall effort. To be most effective, the Coordinating Team must balance the needs of the current ministry programs within the parish while also attending to all the unmet needs that exist. Without that sense of balance, it is too easy for the team to loose their ability to create new and important ministry efforts while planning for those that are already up and running.

In putting together your team, remember:

- **More is more**
  The more people that you have involved in the planning of youth ministry, the more ideas, resources, people, and creativity will be available to you. You want to ensure that the group is large enough to represent the parish community, but small enough to work together well. This usually means about 8-15 people.

- **Diversity is very important**
  The more diverse your group, the better it is. Make sure that you have people from all different walks of life, lots of different ages (including youth), and people with diverse connections to the parish and youth ministry. If your parish is culturally
diverse, you want to make sure that this diversity is also represented on the Coordinating Team. This is especially important if there are different language groups within youth ministry (a Spanish-speaking youth group and an English-speaking youth group, or other combinations).

- **Engage the right talent**
  Because of the specific jobs of the coordinating team, it is really important to get the right people in these roles. The “right person” is someone who is good at long-term planning, has a good vision for youth ministry, can work well with a team, and is well connected within the parish community. Also important is that these individuals should like the behind-the-scenes work that is primary to the Coordinating Team.

- **Make the team credible**
  Every organization, including a parish, has people who are held in esteem. These people have often proven themselves to be effective leaders and are therefore credible (and powerful). If the Coordinating Team for youth ministry hopes to influence the parish structures and engage the larger community more fully in youth ministry, the team will need at least one or two of these “esteemed” members as a part of the team.

- **Balance the youth and adults on the team**
  Young people have an important role to play within the Coordinating Team. They have a right to be able to influence the direction of the ministry and to use their gifts and talents in service of their peers. However, it is important to note that many of the specific roles of this team (developing adult leaders, advocating within the parish) are not roles easily handled by youth alone. This is why it is important to ensure that at least half of the Coordinating Team is adults.

- **Make the Coordinating Team a unique ministry opportunity**
  Too often the Coordinating Team is really just the collection of all the program leaders for youth ministry. These individuals are not only responsible for running all the programs, but are now also asked to add additional responsibilities to their volunteer roles. Make the Coordinating Team a specific role in youth ministry. Invite people to participate in this role, be clear about the expectations (number of meetings, training, etc.), and then invite others to be the program leaders. If a few members of the Coordinating Team want to also be program leaders, that is not a problem, but don’t make it an expectation of their volunteer service.

- **The Coordinating Team is just another role within youth ministry**
  It is easy to assume that the Coordinating Team is “the role” to be involved in within youth ministry, but that is not correct. All four of the roles (support, program leaders, coordinating team, and coordinator) are vitally important. When we make
the Coordinating Team more important than the other youth ministry roles, it is easy for the wrong people to end up on the team. We should invite people to leadership based on their gifts, and if someone is great at being with young people and helping them to grow in faith, and happens to hate planning and meetings, they should be placed in program leadership, because that is where their gifts best serve youth ministry. Select your coordinating team members based on gifts, not years of service, or desire, or because it seems like the “coolest” job in youth ministry.

Getting Started
If you currently do not have a coordinating team or if your team is smaller or less focused than you believe it should be, use the following outline to create your team:

1. **Determine the appropriate size.** If your parish is small (less than 600 families), you might be best served by a team of about eight persons. If your parish has between 600-1200 families, you might consider a team of between 8-12. If your parish is large, you will need a more diverse and therefore larger team—perhaps up to 15 people.

2. **Determine adult/youth balance.** If your team has eight members, you might consider having 3-4 youth on the team. As your team gets larger, it is not essential to have it evenly split between youth and adults. By having more adults on a team of 15 (10 adults, 5 youth, for instance) you are providing more avenues into the parish community by the links that the adults will bring with them. Youth have an important role within the team, and it is essential to ensure that their voice is heard within the team. However, they often are still developing the skills necessary to be long-range planners, vision setters, and leadership developers. These skills might need to come from the adult members of the team, which is why it is important to be as focused on skills that members can bring instead of just the ages that they can represent.

3. **Determine youth representation.** It is not necessary to have one youth from all the grades on your team, but you also don’t want them to only come from one grade. You also want to pay attention to the different schools that the young people attend and try to have a diversity of schools represented on the team. You might also want to work hard to have at least one young person on the team who is not a “regular” in youth ministry events. He/she will provide a unique insight into the programs you are suggesting and new ways to reach out to those youth who are less involved in gathered programs. Again, if your parish is culturally diverse, this should also be a factor in your choice. Once you have determined how many youth you will have on the team, you might be best served by looking at the specific gifts that young people have and then choosing those who are best able to fulfill the duties of these roles, while seeking diversity. (See below for more information on how to select members.)
4. **Determine adult representation.** There are a couple of competing factors in choosing adults. You want the group to be able to be connected to the youth ministry programs that exist, plus the parish, plus new communities or opportunities that are on the horizons. You also want a diversity of ages, marital status, ethnicity, and genders. And, of course, you want them to be good at the specific skills needed for this role. Once you have determined the number of adult who should be on the team, you will want to be very choosy about the adults that will serve on this team. If you are not choosy enough, you will not serve the young people of the parish as well as you would like. (See below for more information on how to select members.)

**Selecting Members**
To be most effective, this team should be created very thoughtfully. The current team, or the parish staff, or the parish council, or some other group of well-connected people should take some time to determine the make-up of the team. One parish, St. Joseph Parish in Marian, IL has a whole discernment process that they use each year. As positions become open, the current team discusses the current make-up of the team and what new voices they would like to add to the team. If a married couple is leaving the team, they might consider asking a new couple to replace them, but this couple might be young adults because the team has become filled with older parishioners and they want a young adult voice on the team. Or perhaps the member who is leaving also serves on the Parish Council so the team will be looking for another strong parish leader to replace her. Once they have made some determinations about who they are looking for, they brainstorm possible candidates. Then someone from the current team calls the prospective members, invites them to consider the invitation, explains the position and time commitments, and asks them if they are willing to put themselves up for discernment. Those that are willing to be discerned fill out a brief application form. The current team then discerns from those candidates and selects the people they believe can best help the team in the coming years. This method has proven very effective for this parish for a number of reasons: it has raised the profile of the Coordinating Team so that people are interested in serving and take it seriously, the intentionality with which they have picked members has ensured that the group is talented and competent, and the diversity of members has given them new insights and connections.

To create your own team, consider the following structure for terms:

- **Length of commitment.** You don’t want to have to train a new team every year, so you want people to serve for more than one year. A three-year term for adults allows people to really function at a high level, but it is a long commitment. Another option is to have a two-year term, but allow people to serve two consecutive terms, for a total of four years if they choose. For youth, it is probably best to do a two-year term since it would be almost impossible to have youth commit for longer that that amount of time.
• **Rotation of terms.** Rotate positions on a continuous basis, so that you always have “old” team members on your Coordinating Team as well as bringing new team members on board. If you have a three-year term, one-third of the members rotate off each year. If you have a two-year term (with the opportunity to extend for 2 years), you may still only have about one-third of the members rotating off each year.

Who, exactly, should be on a team? It is an impossible question to answer here because each parish is unique. The following information should give you a sense of who you should include on your team. The following is an example of what a team might look like:

**Parish of 1200 families**
The 12-member Coordinating Team:

- Mary, part-time Coordinator of Youth Ministry (married, high-school age children)
- Fran, stipend coordinator for confirmation preparation (married, with young children)
- Stan and Maria (married couple, parents of high school age youth )
- Fred, volunteer in the youth group (single, young adult)
- Juan, dad of daughter who sings with the Spanish youth choir (single dad of a junior high youth)
- Mark, volunteer with Boy Scouts and Holy Name Member (widower, grown children)
- Marissa, former parish council president (married, grown children)
- Eliza, 8th grade student at parish school (Spanish-speaking parents)
- Al, 9th grade student at local all-boys Catholic high school
- Emily, 11th grade student at public high school (leadership teen in the youth group)
- Joseph, 12th grade student at public high school (leader at school, former altar server)

Assuming that this team was created new this year, and that the parish is planning on using a two-year term, it would be necessary, in the first year, to invite some people to serve a one-year term, so that a rotation of members can be created that will serve the team in the long term. By asking a third of this group to serve for a one-year term, you can be assured that you will have new members added to the team each year. In the second year, you can invite those who have already served for two year if they are interested in serving for another two. Some will probably say yes, and some will say no. This will create the diversity of rotation that is healthy for the group.
Orientation and Training

It is essential that a brand new Coordinating Team, or any new members on an existing team, receive the training and orientation that they need to be productive members of the team. One parish hosts a day-long training at the beginning of the year for everyone—new and old members. At the training, the Coordinator, in a very hands-on and interactive way, teaches the team about youth ministry (the goals, settings, and components), and invites all the team members to brainstorm ways that the parish is currently living out each of these goals and components. By the end of the morning, the team members not only know what the U.S. Bishops think youth ministry should look like, but they have examined their own parish’s efforts and brainstormed some new possibilities. The Coordinator then helps the team to plan for a season of ministry (a three-month plan for all the youth ministry efforts). Since the first meeting happens in late August, the team plans for the months of December, January, and February. The Coordinator reports that this method has worked extremely well because by the end of the day-long training, the team has learned a lot, has accomplished a great deal of work, and has created a community where both old and new members feel comfortable. Regardless of the style of orientation and training that you select, it will be essential that people know not only what is expected of them, but how they can contribute.

We cannot expect people to have the ability to contribute at the highest level if we do not equip them with the information they need. The Coordinating Team, more than any other youth ministry leaders, must have a clear understanding of a comprehensive vision of youth ministry and the current youth ministry efforts at the parish. Without that knowledge, it is unlikely that they will be able to provide direction for youth ministry.

If you want your team to function as a team and to take their role seriously, it will also be important to support the team members and affirm their contributions. Consider having a special blessing of the Coordinating Team at Mass each year, or do it as a part of an overall blessing of parish (or youth ministry) volunteers. You can also recognize the contributions of members who are leaving the team through a party, “roast,” or a letter of thanks. Creating a sense of teamwork and community can go a long way towards helping people feel good about their ministry efforts, so don’t ignore the simply things that volunteers find supportive—food, drink, laughter, fun, and celebration.

The Collective Ministry of the Body of Christ

“Part of the vision of youth ministry is to present to youth the richness of the person of Christ, which perhaps exceeds the ability of one person to capture, but which might be effected by the collective ministry of the many persons who make up the Church” (A Vision of Youth Ministry, 1976, p. 24).
This statement, written almost 30 years ago, is understated and profoundly true. It must be true that the “person of Christ” exceeds any one person’s ability to capture. Each of us contains a part of the truth of Christ. Each of us is uniquely qualified to be ourselves—sharing the very heart of whom we are and who God made us to be. Young people need to know us all—the cool and not-so-cool, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the tall and the short, the popular and shy. If they only meet a few of us, they will never know the richness of Christ. It is only when the whole parish community leans on each other’s gifts that comprehensive youth ministry flourishes. The “might” and “perhaps” of the above quotation were a first (but tentative) step on a road we now know is the right direction. Our young people deserve the best that we have to offer them. Our adult parishioners also deserve the opportunity to grow from the gifts that young people do and will bring to the Church.

When we trust in the abundance that is already present in our parish community, great things happen. When we utilize the people of our parish, plug them into meaningful, yet not overwhelming roles within youth ministry, and when we honor the skills, gifts, and wisdom of young and old, we can’t help but create true community. Remember the words of Palmer Parker:

“But when a leader is willing to trust the abundance that people have and can generate together, willing to take the risk of inviting people to share from that abundance, then and only then may true community emerge” (p. 136).

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Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Ministering to Middle School Adolescents

This workshop helps parishes know and understand how to minister with young adolescents. The workshop includes information about the developmental and faith needs of young adolescents and models for Middle School Youth Ministry that are effective.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

**Gathering**
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Listen**
Philippians 1:3-6

**Respond**
Please respond: Amen.
- We are made in your image, O God.
- We know that you are working within us each day.
- We trust that you will complete us in your time.
- Help us to live lives that include balance and dreams.
- Help us to be encouragers and learners.
- We praise you for all that we are able to be.

**Send Forth**
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
We praise you and give you glory:
We bless you for calling us to be your holy people.

Remain in our hearts,
And guide us in our love and service.
Help us to let our light shine before others
And lead them to the way of faith.

Holy Trinity of love,
We praise you now and for ever.

Amen!
The Changes of Young Adolescents

The term young adolescent refers to someone who is between 11 and 14 years of age. Young people in this age group are experiencing one of the most rapid periods of brain growth and physical changes of their lifetime. In the midst of these changes, their social sphere is expanding, and they are developing a stronger sense of identity. The following headlines summarize some of the changes associated with this age span.

Changing and Growing
The onset of puberty, which typically occurs earlier for young women than young men, begins a series of physical, emotional, and social changes as adolescents mature. Most youth experience the changes associated with puberty to be confusing and challenging. They are adapting to new situations and often need help and guidance in making these transitions.

To respond, we can:
- Provide patient and consistent presence and guidance for youth.
- Develop social skills in youth.
- Help youth understand the changes they are encountering.

From Concrete to Abstract Thinkers
Young adolescents are growing towards abstract thinking. Abstract thinking allows young people to reflect on situations by standing outside. Abstract thinkers are able to imagine the consequences of actions and “what might happen if.” This progress toward abstract thought is uneven within the individual young person and develops over several years. Because youth are experiencing a greater ability to analyze their situations and social interactions, they are sometimes prone to overly dramatize incidents and become self-involved. Though young adolescents think more abstractly than children, they still need explanations of the faith to be concrete and practical. Youth understand values when they see them lived. They need illustrations and examples to understand the more complex aspects of our shared faith.

To respond, we can:
- Provide clear presentations of faith content and clear directions for activities.
- Introduce youth to people who are living the faith through sharing of stories and introducing youth to members of the faith community.
- Make connections to faith practice by exploring the practical implications of faith learning.
- Help youth to focus outward and have perspective in using their new understandings and skills for reflection.
Developing Their Identity
Young adolescents need time to reflect upon the changes they are experiencing and the feedback they receive from others as they build a consistent self-image. Faith identity can be a guiding focus during this important time. They need supportive adults who encourage them to pray and reflect and help them to discover their unique gifts and abilities.

To respond, we can:
- Provide opportunities for self-definition and ways for youth to demonstrate skills and talents for each other and for the parish community.
- Help youth reflect on values and identity as people of faith.
- Support youth by helping them to learn to make choices and begin to plan for their future.

Drawn to Community and Friendships
The social world of the young adolescent is expanding. While families typically continue to be the primary influence of young adolescents’ values and choices, friends and peer groups are very important. Youth need opportunities to connect their faith to their friendships and experience Christian community.

To respond, we can:
- Build community among young adolescents and provide opportunities for positive interactions with peers and caring adults.
- Help youth to belong within the communities of which they are a part.
- Help youth and parents negotiate the transition to adolescence and develop new patterns for communicating and sharing faith.

Experiencing Faith in New Ways
Young adolescents continue to experience faith primarily through their senses and their direct experiences. They are beginning to experience faith through their belonging to the community of believers.

To respond, we can:
- Spend time with young adolescents in reflection and prayer.
- Provide retreats and service experiences to promote faith integration.
Tips for Sharing Faith with Young Adolescents

Young adolescents are open to learning and growing in faith, but we need to keep their developmental changes and needs in mind. When you take a step toward understanding youth and their situation, you help them take a step toward growing in faith and belonging. When gathering with young people for faith sharing, consider the following tips:

- Provide brief presentations and personal sharing; change activities frequently during a learning session.
- Provide opportunities for physical movement.
- Mix up the groupings for learning activities and sharing: have youth work as individuals, in groups of two or three, in small groups of five to seven, and as part of the larger group.
- Provide clear directions to participants for activities. Write down steps to activities on newsprint if needed.
- Help youth develop positive relationships with peers and adults. Spend informal time with youth and help them connect with each other.
- Provide limits and structure to guide youth towards positive behavior.
- Provide for creative outlets and opportunities for self-expression.
Young Adolescent Ministry Model

“The most effective catechetical programs for adolescents are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry for youth …”

National Directory for Catechesis, p. 201

“All ministry with adolescents must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting and challenging them to become his disciples. For this reason, catechesis is an essential component of youth ministry and one that needs renewed emphasis.”

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry,
United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, 1997, p. 10

To be effective, catechesis is situated within a context of pastoral ministry with young adolescents. Many parishes struggle with a lopsided ministry that misses this important principle. Some parishes focus entirely on faith education without any attention to the other three components, which leaves other youth-serving agencies (schools, sports programs, 4-H, etc.) to explore the significant questions and changes of these formative years (mostly without a faith context). This approach can render faith formation irrelevant since youth are naturally focused on their immediate situations and circumstances. Other parishes provide only social programs for young adolescents that are not really distinct from those offered at the community recreation center. For young adolescents, this type of experience makes little impact and fails to communicate the importance of faith learning and Christian living. Young adolescents need an integrated approach to catechesis. This integration is provided when catechetical efforts are placed within supporting ministries. This ministry generally focuses on four components:

- **Word (Faith Learning)**, which includes ongoing evangelization and catechesis
- **Community**, which promotes belonging within the parish and a peer community
- **Service**, which promotes service and justice education
- **Prayer**, which promotes participation in liturgy and the sacraments, as well as communal and personal prayer

Middle School Youth Ministry
The Four Settings for Middle School Youth Ministry

Young adolescents often rely upon all four settings, though the family remains the most important and the peer group gains in importance as a place to explore and grow in faith. Young people participate in parish life and look for consistency between the faith they learn about and the lived practice of the community. Some young adolescents who are curious about faith topics explore through wider community resources such as Internet resources or books. Many more participate in events such as diocesan conferences, retreats, or service learning programs.

These four settings help youth learn and integrate faith. Experience of these settings also sets youth on the course to continue their faith growth as young adults and adults.

- **Family**: Families share faith through their lived practices and teachable moments of faith sharing and prayer.
- **Peer Group**: Parishes gather young adolescents in peer groups to participate in junior high youth ministry and religious education. In these peer groups, youth learn the faith in ways that connect to their development and faith maturity.
- **Parish**: The life of the parish itself forms faith in youth through worship, learning, community and service. Young adolescents strive to belong and through their participation in the intergenerational community they learn and integrate faith.
- **Wider Community**: The wider community includes the variety of ways that youth learn and grow in faith using the resources in the wider community. This includes participation in diocesan, inter-parish, and regional youth conferences and events. It also includes the resources for faith formation found in print media and the Internet.
Effective Models for Catechesis Integrated within Pastoral Ministry

An effective model for faith formation of young adolescents will take these settings into account. Typically, a parish chooses one of these settings as the primary setting for intentional catechesis while making connections to the other settings. For instance, a parish may choose to have intentional catechesis occur primarily within the peer group and would provide support for family faith sharing, promote parish involvement, and encourage youth to learn on their own by providing resources and starting points.

Notice the attention to the four settings in these thee models for providing intentional catechesis for young adolescents within a pastoral ministry:

- As part of junior high ministry efforts that also include other components of ministry.
  - St. Bede’s Parish meets with young adolescents weekly on Thursday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. For three weeks of the month, the gathering is focused on a catechetical topic and includes community building and prayer. Some of the faith topics connect with liturgical year seasons and feasts. On the fourth week, the meeting is social. Additional socials, service projects, and retreat days are provided several times per year on Friday nights or Saturdays. Each week, parents receive a parent’s page that summarizes the faith topic and provides ideas for continuing the faith learning through prayer and sharing at home. Young adolescents host the parish-wide soup and bread suppers on Friday nights during Lent and provide a dramatic presentation of the Stations of the Cross for the parish community.

- As a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly catechetical program that includes complementary ministry efforts addressing the other components of ministry.
  - Holy Family Parish has weekly catechetical program for young adolescents on Sunday mornings and Monday afternoons during the academic year. The weekly meetings include community building, prayer and faith learning. Once a month there is a social on a Friday night. Once every three months, youth participate in a retreat day. Parents are gathered twice during the year for a workshop and retreat and receive a monthly newsletter with ideas for activities and prayers at home. Leaders work with young adolescents to create a take home prayer booklet for Advent for the parish community. Youth are also encouraged to participate with the community in parish-wide service events.

- As part of the intergenerational faith community. Age-specific faith learning and other components are provided to complement these efforts.
  - At St. Mary’s Parish, the young adolescents participate with their family in the monthly intergenerational faith formation events that are provided from September to June. Families are provided with “take home” kits to continue learning at home. During Advent and Lent, the parish provides faith sharing series for young adolescents. Once a month, an open gym night is provided on Sunday evening. Youth also participate in family service events and an annual weekend retreat for middle school age youth.
Effective Catechesis with Adolescents

Promotes discipleship in Jesus Christ.

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.”
— General Directory for Catechesis, #80

“...present Christ as the Son of God, friend, guide, and model who can not only be admired but also imitated.”
— National Directory for Catechesis, p. 199

Connects faith with life.

“(Catechesis for adolescents) should also help adolescents to articulate the beliefs and teachings of the Church and apply them to their lives.”
— National Directory for Catechesis, p. 199

Speaks to youth in a language they can understand.

Inculturation “means the penetration of the deepest strata of persons and peoples by the Gospel which touches them deeply, ‘going to the very center and roots’ of their cultures.”
Catechesis is the art of letting the proclamation resound in such a way that people can hear it in their lives.
— General Directory for Catechesis, #109

Occurs within a broader context of pastoral ministry.

“The most effective catechetical programs for adolescents are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry for youth ...”
— National Directory for Catechesis, p. 201

“All ministry with adolescents must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting and challenging them to become his disciples. For this reason, catechesis is an essential component of youth ministry and one that needs renewed emphasis.”
— Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, p. 10

1 CT 5; cf. CCC 426; AG 14a. In relation to this christological end of catechesis see part one, chap. I and part two, chap I. “Jesus Christ mediator and fullness of Revelation” and that which is said in part two, chap. I. “Christianity of the evangelical mission.”
2 EN 20; cf. EN 63; RM 52.
Provides developmentally appropriate learning methods.

“Effective ministry with adolescents provides developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique developmental and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families.”

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, p. 20

Forming Faith Identity

“Ministry with adolescents fosters positive adolescent development and growth in both Christian discipleship and Catholic identity.”

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, p. 15

• Identity is at the heart of who we are as persons.
• Key task of adolescence is developing an integrated sense of self-identity.
• Catholic identity is formed when the values, practices, and norms of the Catholic faith have become intertwined with our sense of self-identity.
• This identity becomes a compass for our life, helping us make choices and put our faith into action.
• Faith becomes the operating system.

Help youth to form a Catholic faith identity by…

- knowing people of vibrant faith.
- understanding the core beliefs of our shared faith.
- understanding and participate in the practices of faith, especially the sacraments.
- becoming comfortable with the symbols and carriers of our shared faith.
- knowing and participate in the traditions of our faith.
- developing skills that help them to put faith into action.
Resource 1: Understanding Young Adolescents

Young adolescents are ages 11/12 to 14/15 and are usually in middle school or junior high school.

Young Adolescent Developmental Changes

Physical Development
- developing secondary sex characteristics and the capacity to reproduce
- being sensitive about physical changes and confused about their emerging sexuality
- incorporating their bodily changes into their own self image as male or female

Intellectual Development
- beginning to move from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking, “formal operations,” (what might be true if …)
- questioning and testing adults’ statements and evaluating adults’ values
- being painfully self-conscious and critical, idealistic, argumentative, self-centered
- expanding interests, intense, short-term enthusiasm

Identity Development
- requiring time to reflect upon the new reactions they receive from others and to build a consistent self-image from the different mirrors in which they see themselves
- discovering who they are as unique persons with abilities, interests, and goals
- seeking limited independence and autonomy from parents and adults

Moral Development
- engaging in more complex decision-making process
- resolving moral dilemmas in terms of the expectations of someone or something other than themselves, which can be (a) family, friends, or other significant persons, or (b) what the law or the system of good order calls for in a given situation

Interpersonal Development
- relying on parents and families in setting values and giving affection
- identifying more strongly with the peer group for belonging and friendships
- entering a broader social world of middle school, peer groups, and activity groups
- developing the ability to consider the feelings and needs of others in a relationship
- learning how to relate to the opposite sex (what to say and how to behave)

Faith Development
- deriving their faith from parents and family
- developing their faith and identity, establishing asset of religious beliefs, attitudes, and values, through the experiences of participation and belonging in a caring faith community where they are valued
Young Adolescent Developmental Needs

Opportunities for Self-Definition
- To better understand, define and accept who they are as individuals.
- To explore their widening social world.

Competence and Achievement
- To find out what they are good at doing and to know that what they do is valued.
- To encourage the practice of new skills, public performance and recognition, and reflection on personal and group accomplishments.

Position Social Interaction with Adults and Peers
- Develop interpersonal skills and positive relationships with peers and caring adults.
- Develop new patterns for communicating and relating to parents.

Physical Activity
- Utilize energy through activities that require physical movement.

Meaningful Participation in Families, Schools, Churches and Community Organizations
- Participate in making decisions about activities.
- Share leadership in parish events and service.

Creative Expression
- Express their identity and perspectives through a variety of means: Music, drama, writing, art, etc...

Structure and Clear Limits
- Help in making decisions about behavior.

Personal Religious Experience
- Explore the big questions in life.
- Experience a deeper more personal relationship with God.

Resources for Understanding Young Adolescents and Ministry


Program Resources for Young Adolescent Ministry and Catechesis

*Call to Faith – A Thematic Approach to Young Adolescent Catechesis*

Tom East, General Editor.

- Featuring seven Faith Booklets for Young Adolescents and Session Leader Guides for ministry leaders. This series, developed in collaboration with the Center for Ministry Development, is published by Harcourt Religion Publishers and is available beginning in Spring 2006.
- See: [www.harcourtreligion.com](http://www.harcourtreligion.com).

*HELP Resources (Heads-up, Easy, Low-Cost, Purposeful)*

- This series includes eight titles of books designed for ministry leaders on a variety of aspects of ministry with young teens. Published by Saint Mary’s Press.

*Break Through! The Bible for Young Catholics*

- This Catholic Bible and the accompanying resources are designed for young adolescents. Published by Saint Mary’s Press.

*Youth Ministry Access – Middle School Youth Ministry*

- An exciting new resource for ministry with young adolescents available beginning June 1, 2006. This subscription website will provide a library of resources and a variety of activities and gathered sessions for young adolescent ministry. Developed by the Center for Ministry Development and written by seasoned practitioners from across the United States and Canada.
- See: [www.youthministryaccess.org](http://www.youthministryaccess.org).
Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they may believe in themselves and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments …
Ministry with Youth in a Culturally Diverse Church
By Alejandro Aguilera-Titus

PART I: UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE PARISH CONTEXT

A Glance at the Diverse Catholic Experience

Looking at the experience of previous generations of Catholics and at parish development in response to particular needs and aspirations is helpful to discern the best ways of achieving true ecclesial integration that shares unity in diversity for today and in the future. Such ecclesial integration is of particular importance among adolescents as they face the generational challenge of building the Church of tomorrow by renewing the Church today.

Immigration is not new to the Catholic experience in the United States. In fact, immigration is the beginning and the historical context of the Catholic Church in the United States. Ecclesial integration is a fundamental principle of its growth. The right of people to migrate to support themselves and their families is strongly defended by the Church. This right is deeply rooted in the history of the United States as a country of immigrants.

When the massive European Catholic immigrations took place in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Church allowed the establishment of national parishes in many dioceses to welcome them. Such model of ecclesial integration provided these communities with the ecclesial space they needed to live their faith, to pray, and to worship in the context of their own culture, language, and traditions. The viability of this model was possible because European immigrants came in great numbers, within specific times, and with their own priests. The establishment of national parishes was instrumental in helping new immigrants adapt to life in the United States from a position of strength. Catholic schools in these faith communities were started to provide Catholic children a familiar environment for learning, and to keep them from being sucked into a culture often times unwelcoming of Catholic immigrants.

African American Catholics also had their own ecclesial spaces in parishes established for Black Catholics, or they gathered in the basement of existing parishes. However, coming from an experience of slavery and imposed segregation, these faith communities were less a national parish model than a way of separating Black Catholics from mainstream life and culture. While national parishes for Italians, Poles, Germans, and other European immigrants were located just blocks from each other, parishes for Black American Catholics were located in Black neighborhoods and depended on clergy of European descent, since Blacks were not allowed in seminaries at the time.

Despite these limitations, Black Catholics developed their own sense of cultural identity and belonging to the Church. In fact, African American Catholics still take pride in the story of how they remained faithful to the Church despite overt and covert racism.
The Native American Catholic experience was similar to that of Black Catholics. Native Americans had their own parishes—within the confines of their reservations—and depended on religious priests of European American descent for their sacramental needs, which made it difficult for the natives to develop native ministers and ministries.

Early immigration from Asia was primarily from China. In the mid to late 1800s, laborers were enlisted to help build the railroads, primarily in the western states. Few of the early Asian immigrants were Catholic. Today there are significant Chinese Catholic communities in San Francisco and Los Angeles who can trace their roots to these first immigrants.

The case of the Hispanic American Catholic community was quite different. After the annexation of the southwestern states, Mexican Americans were expected to assimilate into the new reality; they did not, therefore, benefit from the national parish model. Hispanic Americans did not bring their priests with them, which made it even more difficult to have the ecclesial space needed to live the faith, to pray, and to worship in the context of their own culture, language, and traditions.

The same expectation to assimilate was placed on subsequent generations of new immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. In contrast with the European new immigrant experience, Hispanic Americans had a long-standing presence and a steady and robust immigration flow, which continues to the present and into the foreseeable future.

The New Waves of Catholic Immigrants

At the conclusion of World War II, a big push for cultural assimilation took hold in a diverse nation seeking a new sense of unity. Within the Church, the national parish model was phased out as immigration from Europe dwindled. The European new immigrant population aged and its children moved out of ethnic neighborhoods. This exodus gave way to generations of post-immigrant Catholics—mostly of European descent—who came to constitute the bulk of what may be called mainstream Catholic Americans. The move of Blacks and other non-European immigrant groups into the old ethnic neighborhoods also motivated flight to the suburbs.

When the Civil Rights Movement started the desegregation process under the banner of social integration, African American Catholics were expected to assimilate into mainstream culture. This expectation created tension among Black Catholics, as issues of exclusion and discrimination remained clearly present. In 1979, the bishops of the United States once more denounced the problem of racism in their pastoral letter _Brothers and Sisters to Us_,

Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father.²

Even though some African American Catholics moved out of their neighborhoods and into the suburbs, most remained in their neighborhoods and parishes. Native American Catholics
were even more resistant to cultural assimilation and very few ventured outside their reservations.

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a major increase in immigration from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Central America. Immigrants from Mexico came under the labor agreement called the *Bracero Program*. Many Puerto Ricans left the island seeking better job opportunities in a time of great demand for labor in the United States. The Cuban revolution of 1959 drove thousands of Cubans—including many Catholic priests—into exile. Central Americans—especially those from Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala—began fleeing from homelands that were immersed in civil war. While the population coming from Latin American countries shared a common cultural heritage, religion, and two related languages (Spanish and Portuguese), the dramatic influx of new immigrants from Latin American countries began to challenge the assumptions that all Hispanics spoke English, and that they had already assimilated into mainstream culture.

The Vietnam War generated massive immigration from that country. The Korean War generated a significant immigration flow from Korea and other countries in Asia and the Pacific Islands, which were impacted by these wars. The immigration experience of Vietnamese and Korean Catholics was similar to the European experience: the Asians came in significant numbers during a well-defined time span and brought their priests with them. Despite the phasing out of the national parish model, this may be why Vietnamese and Korean Catholics show a preference to gather in personal parishes that are quite similar to the national parishes of the European experience. In contrast, immigrants from the Philippines had a smaller yet steadier immigration flow. Given their cultural ties to the United States and the lack of native priests among them, Filipino immigrants were expected to assimilate into mainstream Catholic life. It is worth noting that immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands represent many different languages and religious traditions among themselves.3

The number of Catholic immigrants from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean has increased significantly over the past twenty years according to the Offices for Pastoral of Migrants and Refugees at the USCCB. Ministry leaders working with immigrant communities are trying to find ways to connect with these newly arrived groups. A growing number of clergy in the United States are coming from these areas.4

PART II: PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

The Shift from Cultural Assimilation to Ecclesial Integration

By the time the Second Vatican Council concluded in 1965, the new landscape for parish life in the United States was in place. With the national parish model behind, and the new waves of Catholic immigrants coming from Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific Islands, the territorial parish shared by culturally diverse members emerged as the new reality of the Catholic Church in the United States.

This new reality generated a shift in pastoral ministry from a policy of cultural assimilation prevalent after World War II to one of ecclesial integration. In a 1988 document, the United States Bishops said that through a policy of assimilation:
New immigrants are forced to give up their language, culture, values and traditions. . . . This attitude alienates new Catholic immigrants from the Church. . . By [ecclesial] integration, we mean that our Hispanic people [and Catholics from all cultures] are to be welcomed to our church institutions at all levels. They are to be served in their language when possible, and their cultural values and religious traditions are to be respected. Beyond that, we most work toward mutual enrichment through interaction among all cultures.\(^5\)

This concept of ecclesial integration generated the emergence of Hispanic ministry and the renewal of Black Catholic ministry in the early seventies, and more recently in ministry among Asian Pacific Islanders and others in parishes across the country. Ten years later, *Renewing the Vision* echoed this call for ecclesial integration by stating that effective youth ministry should help all young people to feel comfortable and welcome so that they can “develop their identity by affirming and utilizing the values and traditions of their ethnic cultures,” and the gifts and talents they offer to the entire faith community.\(^6\)

**A Missed Opportunity to Minister among Adolescents from Diverse Cultures**

Ministry among adolescents found definition in 1976 when the bishops issued the pastoral statement *A Vision of Youth Ministry*. Since then, youth ministry has experienced a tremendous growth, becoming a sophisticated and professionalized ministry among mainstream Catholic adolescents. Ministries within the Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian and Pacific Island Catholic communities have successfully welcomed and developed ministers and ministries among adults, following an ecclesial integration model within culturally diverse parishes.

Unfortunately, adolescents from these ethnic communities only benefited marginally from the impressive growth of youth ministry or culturally specific ministries for adults. The unspoken assumption that children of new immigrants knew English, or were in the process of learning English, made the development of culturally specific catechetical programs for them quite difficult. This assumption was even more prevalent in youth ministry as adolescents from these communities were simply expected to assimilate into the existing mainstream parish youth group, programs, and activities.\(^7\) This assumption is now questioned. A large segment of the young ethnic population outside of mainstream Catholicism has gone without appropriate pastoral attention, which is evidenced by their absence at mainstream diocesan, national youth, and young adult ministry gatherings. In the document *Encuentro & Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry* (EM), the bishops of the United States explained why Catholic adolescents from ethnic and cultural communities had been falling through the cracks between successful youth ministry and culturally specific ministries.

In the case of Hispanic ministry, the principle of ecclesial integration versus cultural assimilation was only consistently applied to ministry with adults, leaving adolescents in a kind of cultural and ministerial limbo. In the area of youth ministry, the bishops wrote that
The traditional [mainstream] model of parish youth ministry does not, for the most part, reach Hispanic adolescents because of economic, linguistic, cultural, age, and educational differences.8

The bishops noted that the majority of parish youth ministry programs served adolescents from well-established families of mostly European descent. They were part of mainstream culture, English-speaking, and middle class or upper-middle class. Many of them lived in the suburbs, were more likely to attend Catholic schools, and were college-bound. On the other hand, Hispanic adolescents were monolingual in Spanish or English, or bilingual. They could be American-born of many generations or new immigrants; working class, middle class, white, Black, or brown. Most of them went to public schools, a significant number had a low educational attainment, and fewer than twenty percent were college bound.9

Such contrasting economic, linguistic, cultural, racial, and educational differences explain part of the reason why most Hispanic adolescents living in culturally diverse parishes do not participate in mainstream youth ministry. Additional factors include a lack of outreach to Hispanic families and a misunderstanding between cultures.

One area of misunderstanding is in the contrast between cultural value systems. In mainstream culture in the United States, individualism is highly valued. Youth ministry often undertakes the task of helping youth to establish their individual identity. In Hispanic culture, the individual exists as part of a community. This understanding of individual needs apart from communal affiliations is a foreign concept for Hispanic young people and their families. These values sometimes clash if youth ministry leaders believe Hispanic parents are stifling their child’s emerging sense of self, or if Hispanic parents believe youth ministry leaders are encouraging disrespectful behavior and rebelliousness. These factors also help explain the emergence of alternative youth groups and apostolic movements for Hispanics and by Hispanics to fill the pastoral void created by a policy of assimilation.

A similar situation faces adolescents from Black, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander families living in culturally diverse parishes; they often find themselves without the ecclesial space to be themselves.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II met with more than 10,000 Native Americans in Phoenix, Arizona. During the gathering, the pope encouraged Native American Catholics to “keep alive your cultures, your languages, the values and costumes which have served you well in the past and which provide a solid foundation for the future.” The Catholic faith, he added, can thrive in any culture. The pope spoke in response to the desire of Native Americans to “seek to follow Jesus in languages and cultures which God has given us.”10

These words evoke the image of each culture as holy ground, for God dwells in each culture and in each person in a unique and amazing way. The words are also a clear example of what the Church understands by inculturation of the Gospel. The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) says
The Word of God became man, a concrete man, in space and time and rooted in a specific culture: “Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the men [and women] among whom he lived.” This is the original “inculturation” of the word of God and is the model of all evangelization by the Church, “called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures.”

In the context of a culturally diverse parish, inculturation comprises all the riches of the different cultural and ethnic communities given to Christ as an inheritance. Inculturation is a profound process that touches every culture deeply, going to the very center and roots of each culture, taking from each what is compatible with Gospel values while seeking to purify and transform beliefs, attitudes and actions which are contrary to the Reign of God.

The challenge to inculturate the Gospel is part of the most fundamental mission of the Church—to evangelize and bring the Good News of Christ to every human situation. John Paul II called for a New Evangelization that would renew the commitment of the Church, and of each believer, to denounce all things that go against the dignity of the human person, and to build a culture of life inspired by Gospel values. The New Evangelization serves as a bridge between faith and culture, proving that a faith that does not generate and transform culture is a sterile faith.

The Difference Between Multicultural Ministry and Intercultural Ministry

The inculturation of the Gospel involves following Jesus’ example to become “Gracious hosts for one another, as we acknowledge and embrace our cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity and God’s unique presence in each other’s lives, histories, and cultures.” Inculturation describes “a truly Catholic understanding” of ministry among diverse communities that focuses less on how mainstream culture looks at and relates to minority communities and more on how to have meaningful conversations and build meaningful relationships among all the culturally and racially diverse members of the parish community.

This subtle and yet powerful difference can be captured in the concepts of multicultural ministry and intercultural ministry respectively. The following example may help illustrate the differences between the two approaches.

Example A
At St. Joseph’s parish, the primary expression of youth ministry is a youth group. Despite the youth group’s open-door policy, the pastoral leadership is concerned with the lack of cultural and racial diversity in the parish youth group and its activities. The leadership decides to reach out to adolescents from the other two cultural groups that are present in the parish in significant numbers. The goal is to increase these adolescents’ participation by having them join the youth group and participate in its activities. After a good amount of effort, a handful of adolescents join the youth group, and the leadership is grateful for the new members and the fact that the youth group is closer to becoming multicultural. However, the lack of response from the two minority communities to get involved is disappointing to them.
the other hand, the leadership from these minority communities remains distant because it feels excluded from the decision-making process.

Example B
The leadership of the youth ministry in the neighboring church, St. Luke, shares the same concern and seeks to achieve the same goal of increasing the participation of adolescents from the two ethnic and cultural communities present in the parish. The youth ministry program at St. Luke is comprehensive and already allows for the convening of a variety of groups of youth around interests, ministries, and needs. To address its concern about the participation of youth, the leadership decides to meet with the leaders of the two communities to study the situation and identify the best way of reaching out to these young Catholics. After reflection and discernment, everyone decides together to develop youth groups for each one of these two communities in the context of one parish, which will be coordinated under one united but diverse youth ministry. After a few months, both of these new youth groups are bursting at the seams with adolescents, and activities between the three youth groups begin to take place in the context of an ‘intercultural’ youth ministry. This does not discourage adolescents from joining the already-established youth community or other activities, but it gives them a choice.

The second example is representative of a pastoral approach, which has proven to be successful in bringing young people from different cultural and ethnic groups into active participation in the life and mission of the Church. Anecdotal evidence shows that a growing number of parishes are welcoming adolescents from diverse cultures and successfully ministering among them in the context of their particular lived experience. Some parishes have several youth groups and many different strategies within youth ministry. Some have also developed events, activities, and programs to bring all Catholic young people together as one young and diverse Church.

Renewing the Vision affirms this effort when it says that “Ministry with adolescents creates flexible and adaptable program structures that address the changing needs and life situations of today’s young people and their families within a particular community.” A flexible response allows for a variety of programs, communities, and strategies, which can respond to the particular needs and aspirations of particular groups. This idea of flexible ministry responses is often described as comprehensive youth ministry.16

Envisioning a New Pentecost

The existence of different youth groups and apostolic movements bring parishes face to face with the contrasting realities of middle class/working class, post-immigrant/new immigrant, citizen/foreigner, mainstream white/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander cultures; and black/white/brown/yellow faces and realities. Bringing these very different realities to the one table of the Lord is the great challenge of building the Reign of God beginning right at home. These diverse groups and ministries are fertile ground in which to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each Catholic adolescent. These groups are also the first step toward interaction and ecclesial integration of adolescents within culturally diverse parishes.
Interactions between culturally diverse adolescents are transformational opportunities that bear the fruits of Christian unity in the spirit of a new Pentecost. As it did two thousand years ago, the Feast of Pentecost today “offers a redeeming vision of human diversity. It is a vision of unity among peoples that goes far beyond their differences and in which all share the same human dignity.”

The Holy Spirit empowered The Apostles to preach to people of many nations and different languages, creating among them a new community united by the same Spirit. The communion of the Church, rooted in God’s love, is called to offer all Catholic young people the sense of identity, purpose, and community they seek. Claimed by Christ and baptized into the Holy Spirit, all Catholic adolescents from all generations, immigration statuses, or social situations are full members of the Church—worthy of the love, the respect, and the support of the entire Christian community. Faced by a society that is increasingly diverse and to some extent divided, it is urgent to proclaim with joy and firm faith that through Communion with Christ, Catholics enter into living communion with all believers.

Learning from past pastoral experiences and reclaiming the universal roots of the Catholic faith provides youth ministry today with new opportunities to achieve unity in diversity. Building upon the openness and appreciation for diversity that is present in this generation of Catholics is the opportunity to bring together the many faces of Catholic young people in a new yet old way. “The power of the Holy Spirit and the intimate connection of the members of the faith community give unity to the body, and in this way, stimulate and produce love between the believers.”

(Alejandro Aguilera-Titus is the Associate Director of the Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC.)

8 EM, 70.
9 EM, 70.
12 GDC, # 109.
15 MF, 5.
16 RTV, page 23.
19 GDC, no. 239.
Diocese of Helena
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Involving Youth in Service

This workshop helps parish leaders develop a stronger justice and service component within youth ministry by teaching strategies to involve youth in direct service in meaningful ways. This workshop will also examine how to do intentional justice education and infuse Catholic social teaching into all youth ministry efforts.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

Gathering
Leader: God of Justice, God of the Poor. Be with us tonight as we learn and grow in our understanding of your call for peace and justice in our world. Open our hearts, minds, and spirits to all that you offer us tonight. We ask this in Your Son’s name. Amen.

Listen: Matthew 25:31-46

Respond
For brothers and sisters who live in poverty, may our concern and prayer ease their suffering…
Hear our prayer, O Lord.

For justice to reign throughout the world, through your grace and our actions…
Hear our prayer, O Lord.

For those who show attitudes of tolerance, reconciliation, and dialogue. May we learn from their example and find the strength to follow their lead…
Hear our prayer, O Lord.

For those who work for peace and all those who are committed to the Gospel value of justice…
Hear our prayer, O Lord.

For all those in leadership throughout the world, and for those of us who elect them, may we find wisdom in the years to come…
Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Send Forth

Say Together…
God our Creator,

to those who are hungry and thirsty,
give food and drink.

To those who are not hungry and thirsty,
Give a hunger and a thirst for justice.

Help us to share in the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

We pray through Christ the Lord. Amen.
(Closing prayer adapted from Operation Rice Bowl, Catholic Relief Services.)
Reflection on Justice

Why do you think that justice and service are important?

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

“Men and women who are made ‘new’ by the love of God are able to change the rules and the quality of relationships, transforming even social structures. They are a people capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails the exploitation of man by man.”

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

United State Catholic Bishops

“The ministry of justice and service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity to all ministry efforts.”

Renewing the Vision: A Catholic Framework for Youth Ministry
Catholic Social Teaching

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
We believe that we all are created in the image and likeness of God. Because of this fact, every single human life is sacred. There is nothing that anyone can do to take this dignity away. All of our Catholic social teaching flows from this principle. People are more important than things. All institutions are judged by how they protect or how they violate the dignity of the human person.

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation
Our God is a Trinity, three persons, one God. These three persons are in constant relationship with each other. Being created in the image of God, we too need to be in relationships. Human beings are social. This principle reminds us that when we create social structures we must always do so in a way that protects human dignity. Family is at the center of all community, and we need to strengthen family.

Our faith calls us to community in an active way. We have a responsibility to live our values in our social world. We need to stand up for the dignity of all people, especially the poor and the oppressed. When we participate in society, we must always make decisions for the common good of society.

Rights and Responsibilities
Human beings, because of our dignity, have basic human rights. These rights include access to food, affordable housing, decent healthcare, education, and a whole variety of things to ensure that we can live a full human life. These rights help us to protect our dignity in concrete ways. But these are not just our rights alone. They are the rights of every human being. Therefore, we have the responsibility to help maintain and protect these rights, not just for ourselves, but for everyone.

Preferential Option (Commitment) for the Poor and Vulnerable
We believe that God loves everyone in such a way that even our most powerful experience of love is just a taste of how much God loves us. God loves each of us equally, but Scripture reminds us that some people’s needs are so urgent and so great that their needs come first. Therefore, while everyone is important, those who have no voice in our society, those whose human rights are violated, those whose dignity is not recognized, must take our first priority as Catholic Christians. Jesus’ story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) teaches us that when we enter into the lives and the struggles of the poor and vulnerable, we will experience Jesus’ presence in a real and powerful way.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
We believe that work is not just a way to make a living. Work is one of the ways that we participate in the ongoing creation of the world. That means those who are responsible for the employment of people have a special responsibility to make decisions that uphold the dignity of workers and their rights. Those rights include being able to earn fair wages, to have productive work, and to have a say in decisions that affect them.
**Solidarity**
We believe that every human person was created by the same God. Ultimately, we are all brothers and sisters, we are all connected. Solidarity reminds us of this connection that we have to our whole human family. This connection is greater than anything that divides us, including race, religion, and even geography.

We practice solidarity when it matters to us that people die of preventable diseases because they were born in Africa, not the United States. We practice solidarity when we drink coffee that is fair trade or buy clothing not made in a sweatshop and when we live a little more simply and waste less of Earth’s resources.

**Care for God’s Creation**
Stewards do not own; rather, they are charged with taking care of something that is not theirs. Earth belongs to God, and we are the stewards of it. When we do things that protect the Earth and care for it, we acknowledge that the Earth is not ours to do with as we please, but we also show reverence to God, the creator of all. It is very Catholic to be an environmentalist!

Adapted from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions.*
Providing Service Opportunities

Allow for Direct Service and Social Change
Those who are only involved in direct service miss the opportunity to understand the reasons why people are homeless, hungry, illiterate, etc. A parish’s service ministry should provide opportunities for young people to be involved in social change activities such as advocacy work, letter writing campaigns, and education programs. Balance is important.

Be Open to Local, Regional, and Global Concerns
We are one human family created by one God. Therefore we believe that all of the peoples of the world are our brothers and sisters. Service opportunities should be provided that meet the needs of the local community but should also address regional or national needs (a summer service trip to Appalachia) and global concerns (consider the Heifer Project, Food Fast program from Catholic Relief Services).

Provide Opportunities for Initial Exploration and Ongoing Commitment
If given the opportunity, many in this generation will commit to service on a regular basis. Part of the way that this happens is if young people have lots of different opportunities to serve. When they have explored many types of service, they may find that there is a particular ministry/service to which they are best suited. Helping young people to discover their own talents and passions for justice in the midst of service activities will provide them with direction for an ongoing commitment to a service organization.

Be Attentive to the Differing Needs of Older and Young Adolescents

Young Adolescents (12-15)
Younger adolescents, because of their developmental needs, will most likely benefit the most from service that is direct. They will respond best if they can see, feel, and touch the people/situations that they are responding to. They will most likely respond best when asked to serve people food, rack neighbor’s leaves, visit nursing homes, and do other direct service work.

Younger adolescents are in the process of discovering their own gifts and talents. The more variety of service opportunities that you can provide, the better. Service should give them a breath of chances to try out new things and develop their skills.

Older Adolescents (16-18)
Older adolescents, due to their growing maturity, are ready for service that moves beyond direct interaction to social change activities. They are more able to make the connections to people that they can’t see or serve directly—raising money or awareness about people in foreign lands, letter writing campaigns in defense of the environment, and the like. They will still enjoy direct service, but can also move beyond it.

Older adolescents should have a better sense of their own gifts, so they may choose to do a great deal of service in a particular setting—a weekly volunteer at a children’s reading program, a coach for the Special Olympics, or a commitment to ending suffering in Africa.
The Benefits of Youth Service

The Search Institute has been studying the benefits of service involvement, and has identified at least 12 ways that service involvement can have a positive benefit for young people.

Service promotes healthy lifestyles and choices among teenagers. Teenagers who serve develop values and priorities that help them make positive choices.

Serving helps to develop positive self-esteem, self-confidence, and social skills. As they serve, they learn that they can make a difference in the world—that they have important things to contribute.

Serving helps young people discover their personal gifts and abilities. Research suggests that involvement in service can increase self-esteem and moral reasoning abilities.

Serving helps the community see young people as a vital resource to address some of the problems and needs it faces. No longer do communities look at young people as “problems to be solved,” but they begin to see them as valued contributors to the community.

Serving builds leadership skills and abilities in youth. Through service, young people learn leadership skills such as decision-making, planning, motivating other, following through, and problem-solving.

Serving teaches young people new skills and perspectives. Youth see the world with a new perspective when they’ve been exposed to different people and different needs.

Serving nurtures a life-long commitment to service and justice involvement. People who learn to serve when they are young are more likely to be service oriented when they are adults.

Serving builds a stronger sense of community among the youth who serve. By serving side by side with others, they recognize the sometimes—hidden skills and abilities of their peers.

Serving has an impact on individual people who are served. Their needs are met and they receive a sense of hope and empowerment.

Serving helps young people have an impact on critical issues facing the community, nation, and the world. Through their service, young people become important contributors to the community.

Serving improves the quality of life and the climate of the community. The young people’s efforts not only meet important needs, but they also give people a sense that things can be done to make the community a better place.

Serving can be a powerful teaching tool. When youth serve others, they must apply skills and knowledge to concrete situations. It challenges them to learn and grow.
Planning Good Service Experiences

Phase One: Selecting Appropriate Service Sites

- Choose an agency that is youth-friendly and that values the work of young people while recognizing their age and maturity, and that will expose young people to the real needs and issues surrounding the service that they will be doing.
- Select an agency that is in need of the help your group or the individual can provide. Be specific about the size of your group, the age of the participants, and their past experience of service.
- Ask for an orientation from someone at the agency for the young people that will be focused and to the point. What does the agency do? Who is helped by the agency? How are the programs funded? How does the agency measure success?
- Have a contact at the agency and take a tour of the agency prior to the service experience.
- Be sure the working conditions are safe and appropriate for the age group of your participants.

Phase Two: Good Preparation

- Explain why the service is needed and why Christians respond to these needs.
- Talk about what they will hear, see, and smell when they arrive at the service site and what they are likely to encounter there.
- Provide them with the training and skills needed to accomplish their tasks.
- Challenge them to be open to the experience and to do whatever is necessary, even if it is a job that they would not regularly want to do.
- Help them to set realistic expectations for the experience.
- Be sure that your adult supervisors are well prepared for the experience and will allow the young people to take the lead whenever possible.

Phase Three: A Quality Service Experience

- Work with the agency’s staff to ensure the service experience is meaningful and worth the time and energy that will be invested from both the young people and the agency.
- Spend the time on organizational details so that the experience is not lessened by lack of supplies, poor timing, etc.
- Think through your service opportunity and be ready to be flexible to handle new situations as they arise. Oftentimes service organizations can have emergencies that make it hard for them to give you attention. Will you be able to make the experience meaningful on your own?
- Ensure that the participants feel supported and accompanied in their service experience.
- Affirm people for their service and help them to see the benefits of service in their lives.

Phase Four: Reflection and Follow-up

- Process what happened, and connect the experience of service with the faith story through shared conversation, reflection, and/or journaling.
- Help the participants integrate their learning with their lives through ideas for concrete actions.
- Encourage participants to suggest changes or improvements to the service program.
The Pastoral Circle Process

Involvement
Involvement is the first movement of the Pastoral Circle. Involvement gives participants a reason to care about an issue and the motivation to learn more. Involvement can spring from a personal experience or the lived experience of the group; often it comes from a planned activity that is used to “hook” youth and get them interested. An involvement activity can be anything that makes the issue more real: speakers sharing their story, a simulation game that illustrates a particular scenario of injustice, a song, or movie.

Exploration
Exploration, sometimes called social analysis, is the next movement of the Pastoral Circle. Exploration requires moving beyond that experience and asking the questions that give a clear and accurate picture of the social issue. To that end, in exploration the primary goal is to find out the “who, what, where, and why” of the situation. It is within this movement that stereotypes are shattered, myths are debunked, and we begin to understand the problem as it really exists instead of based on our personal experiences.

Reflection
The third movement of the Pastoral Circle is reflection. Reflection answers the question, “What does our faith have to say about this issue?” We delve into Scripture and Catholic social teaching and examine the current work that the church is doing on each issue.

Reflection is the catechetical moment of the pastoral circle. As with all good catechesis, the goal is not just to help young people learn about faith from an intellectual perspective. Rather, it is to provide an opportunity for the Word of God and the Tradition of our church to transform the hearts of young people as well.

Action
The last movement of the Pastoral Circle is action. The Pastoral Circle (or any other justice education effort) should ultimately lead to action. Often the Pastoral Circle will lead to opportunities for young people to engage in acts of direct service. These are powerful experiences and can be especially meaningful when done as a part of good justice education. The insights and experiences that individuals have, as well as the relationships that they develop, grow deep roots when they are planted in soil that is fertilized by good social analysis and a real understanding of Catholic social teaching. These are experiences that can be transformational for your young people, giving them an outlet to be the disciples of Christ that all youth ministry efforts work toward.

From “Reflections on the Component of Justice and Service,” by Sean Lansing,
Going Shopping – It’s a Gospel Thing!
By Mike Poulin

Purpose
This session, designed for older adolescents, explores how we are connected to workers around the world through the clothing that we own. Participants will explore the realities behind sweatshop labor, and using the lenses of Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the participants will come to see sweatshop workers as sisters and brothers in Christ. We will also uncover ways that we can help stop sweatshop labor and see our own shopping as a justice issue.

Materials Needed
- Post-it® flags or colored pushpins for the Involvement
- Make a copy of **Resources 1-5** for small groups
- Four Bibles, marked with the Scripture passages for the Reflection
- Make one copy of **Resource 6, Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice**, for Reflection
- Newsprint and markers for the session leader
- CD player and “We Are the Light of the World” by Tom Tomaszek on CD or **Spirit & Song** songbooks

Prepare in Advance
1. Display a world map in a prominent place in the room.

2. Invite 5 volunteers to assist with the reflection activity.

3. Become familiar with Web sites referenced in the Action activity. These Web sites are also great as a leader resource to understand the issues around sweatshops.

4. Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the following format for petitions:
   “We pray for the hands in __________ which made my ________.”

5. Choose a prayer leader to lead the petition and a song leader.
Session at a Glance

7:00 pm Welcome and Introduction
7:10 pm “Wear in the World” (Involvement)
7:25 pm “Who Makes our Clothes?” (Exploration)
7:55 pm “A Scriptural Perspective” (Reflection)
8:20 pm “What Can We Do?” (Action)
8:30 pm Closing Prayer
8:45 pm Refreshments and Announcements

Outline

Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)
Gather the group together and ask the following questions to get the conversation flowing:

- Who likes to go shopping?
- What is your favorite store?
- What are your favorite things to buy?

After a few answers introduce the evening’s theme by saying
Tonight we are going to talk about shopping! Did you know that where and how we shop is a way for us to live out our faith? Let’s get started!

“Wear in the World” (Involvement) (15 minutes)
Ask participants to check the tags on their clothing, possessions, and other items in the room to find out where each item was made. Look for “Made in” labels on shirts, shoes, pants, hats, jackets, and backpacks. When they are finished, invite participants to report the names of all the different countries from which they have items with a “Made in” tag. Use a Post-it® flag or a pushpin to mark each of the countries on the map.

After all of the countries are marked on the map, lead a large group discussion using the following questions:

- What do you know about the countries where our products are made?
- What do you know about the people who live there?
- Why do you think that some of our products are made so far away?
- Who do you think benefits from this type of production?

Close this discussion by saying something like
Tonight we are going to look at sweatshops. The term sweatshop refers to workplaces where workers’ rights are violated. Workers in sweatshops often have to work for long periods of time earning meager wages. The conditions may be dangerous or uncomfortable. Employers may be physically, verbally, or sexually abusive. Some sweatshops exploit child labor.

Include the following points of information:
• Sweatshops open where labor is cheap and laborers have few other choices for work. Large companies looking for low labor costs drive the demand for such factories. In many cases, it is cheaper for a corporation to ship materials halfway around the world to be assembled and then to ship the finished product back than it is to pay higher, local labor costs.

• Companies benefit from low labor costs. Investors in those companies benefit from higher dividends. Consumers benefit from lower prices, but sweatshop workers are afforded few benefits for their labors.

In the next two activities we will learn about conditions in some of the countries where our possessions are made and we will read stories that help us learn more about sweatshop workers and the attitude of companies toward these conditions.

“Who Makes our Clothes?” (Exploration) (30 minutes)

Step 1 (15 minutes): Divide the participants into five small groups. Distribute Resource sheets 1-5, one to each group. Give them 10 minutes to prepare a brief presentation to the group. Ask them to answer the following questions:

• What is your reading about? What are the facts that we should know?
• Was there anything in the reading that surprised you?
• What points does it make about sweatshops?

Step 2 (15 minutes): Invite each group to come up and present their information to the group.

“A Scriptural Perspective” (Reflection) (25 minutes)

Share the following with the participants:

Ultimately, sweatshop labor is a form of oppressing people. Individuals with few other options take work that is low paying, dangerous, or excessive because they have no other viable way of supporting themselves or their families. Companies take advantage of these situations in order to make larger profits. Exploiting the vulnerable is not a new tactic. It has been happening for thousands of years.

Invite the first reader to proclaim Exodus 1:8-14 and 3:1-10. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection, then say

Pharaoh oppresses the Israelites, but God hears their cries and sends Moses to free them.

Invite the second reader to proclaim Luke 19:1-10. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection, then say

It is evident in this reading that Zacchaeus was not popular among the people. In Jesus’ time tax collectors were known to use their positions of power to cheat people
to make themselves rich. They became wealthy by using power to take advantage of the powerless.

Invite the third reader to proclaim Jeremiah 22:13-14, 17-19. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection, then say

An oppressive king whose attention is focused on riches will be punished.

Invite the fourth reader to proclaim Deuteronomy 24:10-15. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection, then say

The poor and foreigners are to be treated fairly or you will be found guilty by God.

Follow the readings by posing these questions to the entire group and leading a short discussion:

- How are the situations in the Bible readings we just heard similar to the stories we read earlier?
- What does the Bible tell us about the poor and oppressed?

Invite the fifth reader to read Resource 6, Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice, and ask the following question:

- How should we respond to situations of exploitation and oppression as faith-filled Catholic Christians?

Post their responses on newsprint.

**What Can We Do? (Action) (10 minutes)**

Offer the following action steps to the participants as a means of doing something to make a difference on the issue of sweatshops. As a group, decide on one action step to take together. Completing the action may take time beyond the original session.

- Get a rating of your favorite companies at [www.responsibleshopper.org](http://www.responsibleshopper.org).
- Learn how to buy “sweat-free” products. Contact these organizations for more information:
  - Serrv International at [www.serrv.org](http://www.serrv.org)
  - Ten Thousand Villages at [www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com)
  - International Federation for Alternative Trade at [www.ifat.org](http://www.ifat.org)
  - The Ecosandals project at [www.ecosandals.com](http://www.ecosandals.com)
- Buy sweat-free gifts at Christmas. Start a campaign in your community to get others to do the same.
- Join a student campaign to end sweatshop labor. Visit [www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops/index.htm](http://www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops/index.htm) to learn more.
- Write to companies, urging them to support fair labor practices.
- Write to government officials in support of trade agreements that focus on fairness and not U.S. economic domination.
• Host a sale of fairly traded goods. Visit Catholic Relief Services at www.catholicrelief.org and under ‘Our Work’ select In the US – What We Do, for instructions on how to hold a sale.
• Join a protest of a company that exploits its laborers. Visit www.coopamerica.org and select Boycott Action News for information on protests, researching companies, and organizing a boycott.
• Learn more about issues of work by visiting the Web sites of the National Labor Committee for Worker and Human Rights at www.nlcn.org and National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice at www.nicw.org.

Closing Prayer (15 minutes)
Move to a sacred space, or gather for prayer in your normal fashion, and invite everyone to spend a quiet moment or two creating a petition. Give these instructions:

- Go back to the beginning of the session when we mapped out where our clothes came from. Create a petition for the maker of one of your items of clothing using the format on the newsprint.

If participants have difficulty writing a petition, offer this as an example: We pray for the hands in Macau which made my coat.

After creating their petition, invite everyone into a circle for prayer.

Gather
Sing the first three verses of “We are the Light of the World.”

Listen

Respond
To introduce the prayers of petition, say something like

Our prayer leader will lead us in the petitions. When it is time to say the country, he/she will invite everyone to say their country ‘popcorn style’ (rather than going around the circle, participants are invited to share randomly). We will do the same for the item of clothing.

Prayer Leader:

- Lord we lift up those who suffer to survive in oppressive situations. Let our prayer tonight deepen our commitment to ending their oppression.

- We pray for the hands in (pause so everyone can say their country)…

- Which made my (pause again) …

Allow for a moment of silence.
**Go Forth**
Sing verses 4-6 of “We are the Light of the World.”

**Refreshments and Announcements** (15 minutes)
Thank everyone for their participation in tonight’s program. Serve light refreshments, and make any announcements that are needed.

This session was written by Mike Poulin, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Washington DC.
Resource 1

Testimony of Lisa Rahman, Shah Makhdum Factory
September 2002

My name is Lisa Rahman. I'm 19 years old and I live in Dhaka. My family is very poor. I had to start working in the garment factories when I was 10 years old. I never had the chance to go to school.

Even we 10 year old children were forced to work from 8:00 in the morning until 10 p.m. every night, seven days a week. If I ever dozed off, the supervisor would slap me and yell at me, why are you dozing, why aren't you working!?!?

For the last three years I have worked at the Shah Makhdum factory, where we sewed mostly Disney garments. I am a senior sewing operator. I worked on all these garments. My job was to close these seams. My salary is 1,750 taka a month. When I came to this country I was told that this is less $30. (14 cents an hour). I haven't had a raise in three years, I'm still making 1,750 taka.

Disney was always the majority of the production in the factory. We were required to work from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. every day. Often we were kept later, to 11:00 p.m. or midnight. This would happen ten to thirteen days a month. We work seven days a week, with no regular holiday. At most we get one day off a month. Conditions at the factory are very harsh. There is constant pressure for us to work faster. I must do 200 pieces an hour. That is the target the company sets. If I failed to meet that target, the supervisor would call me names. The supervisors yell and curse at us. They curse our parents and call them filthy. Sometimes they slap us-slap us in the back of the head, or push or shove us. We are not allowed to talk. If we are caught they hit us.

The factory is very hot. There is little air. While we are working our clothes are wet with sweat.

They only allow us to use the bathroom once or twice a day, and the bathrooms are very filthy. The drinking water is also dirty and many of the girls suffer from diarrhea, me too.

The company does not allow maternity leave or benefits. If a woman becomes pregnant, they force her out of the factory.

They do not allow sick days. We have no health insurance. If I get sick, it would cost me 300 taka to see a doctor or get medicines. I can't afford that-it is nearly a week's wage.

The company does not let us off for the national holidays and we never receive a vacation.

We get just two breaks in the entire day, an hour for lunch from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and a 10- minute break at 8:00 p.m. when the company gives us a banana and a piece of bread. Even if you have not finished eating you have to rush back to work.

We are forced to work to 11:00 or 12:00 midnight every day, but the company always cheats us on our overtime pay. They keep two sets of time cards-one to show Disney, and the other real one. The one for Disney shows that we work from 8:00 a.m. to just
6:00 p.m. and that we receive every Friday off. The real time card shows us working seven days a week until 10 p.m. or later. But we are not paid for these hours. So we are being cheated out of three to four hours of overtime a day.

Also, if they say we made a mistake, they deduct more money from our wages.

The factory does not allow women who reach 30 or 35 years of age to keep working. The bosses say they are too old and not fit to do the work, that their eyesight is no good, so they force them to quit. They leave with nothing—penniless—even if they plead.

I walk to and from work each day to save money. It takes an hour each way. I leave at 6:50 to get to work by 8:00 a.m. I get home at 11:00 or 12 midnight.

I live in one room with my old parents and two nieces. We share one wooden platform. It's very crowded. When it rains our roof leaks, so we have to roll up our bedding and sit in a dry corner.

I get up at 5:00 a.m. I have to cook and wash. Ninety to 100 people in my neighborhood all use one water pump, one outhouse and one stove with four burners. So we often have to wait in line for our turn.

Charlie and Barbara asked me if I knew anything about the Disney Code of Conduct. I have no idea what it is—none of the workers do. I have never heard of it.

When Charlie asked me what I thought the Disney shirt would cost, I imagined maybe 50 or 100 taka. (85 cents to $1.50). I was shocked to hear that it cost $17.99—that's more than I earn in two weeks working.

I've never had the chance to see a movie, to ride a bicycle or to go on a vacation. We can't afford juice. Maybe we can afford to eat chicken once every two or three months. We want Disney to return its work to our factory. But, We are asking that our rights be respected and that we are treated as human beings. I hope for a better life for myself and all the workers. If we could only earn 4,500 taka a month (37 cents an hour) we could live with a little dignity.

I never thought I would come to the United States and see all these beautiful things. Being here is like a dream for me. I'm not frightened. I feel very lucky. I am so very glad to have the chance to speak for the women and workers of Bangladesh in the hope that we can win our rights.

I never imagined that the people in the U.S. who buy the clothing we sew would ever care or think about us. I thank you from my heart. We are willing to work very hard—only we need our rights. Please, please ask Disney to do the right thing.

Resource 2

“Testimony of Nasrin Akther”

Directions: This resource sheet is in Adobe format (.pdf) only. Download the file from the Youth Ministry Access Web site in the same manner you downloaded the outline for this session. Using the File Archive and Search button, type in Going Shopping: Testimony of Nasrin Akther.
Resource 3

Country Profile—Thailand

FAST FACTS
- Thailand is in Southeast Asia and borders Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia.
- It is 514,000 square km or about twice the size of Wyoming.
- The climate is tropical.
- Thailand is home to over 62.3 million people (July 2002 estimate).
- Twelve and one half percent of the population lives below the poverty line by Thai standards.
- The unemployment rate is 3.9%.
- The literacy rate is 93.8%.

HOURLY WAGE
The National Labor Committee reports that the approximate hourly base wage in Thailand is 78 cents.

LABOR SNAPSHOT
The minimum wage ranges from $3.01 to $3.71 (133 to 165 baht) per day, depending on the cost of living in various provinces. This wage is not adequate to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. With extended family members' financial contributions, the minimum wage provides the basis for a marginally adequate overall standard of living.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for ensuring that employers adhere to minimum wage requirements; however, nationwide, more than half of workers receive less than the minimum wage, especially those in rural provinces. Despite encouragement of employees to report violations to labor inspectors, the enforcement of minimum-wage laws is mixed.

Working conditions vary widely...In medium-sized and large factories, government health and safety standards often are applied, but enforcement of safety standards is lax. In the large informal sector, health and safety protections are substandard.


Resource 4

Country Profile—Dominican Republic

FAST FACTS
- The Dominican Republic comprises the eastern two thirds of the island of Hispaniola.
- It is east of Haiti.
- It is almost 49,000 square km, or roughly twice the size of New Hampshire.
- The climate is tropical.
- The Dominican Republic boasts a population of nearly nine million (July 2002 estimate).
- Twenty-five percent of the population lives below the poverty line by Dominican standards.
- There is 15% unemployment.
- The literacy rate is 82.1%.

HOURLY WAGE
The National Labor Committee reports that the approximate hourly base wage in the Dominican Republic is 69 cents.

LABOR SNAPSHOT
The minimum monthly salary is $152 (2,490 pesos) in the [Free Trade Zones] and $208 (3,416) outside the FTZ’s. The minimum wage does not provide a decent standard of living for a worker and his/her family. It only provides approximately one-third of the income necessary to sustain an average family. The national poverty level, which is based on a basket of goods and services consumed by a typical family, is $402 (6,607 pesos) per month for a family of five.

The Labor Code prohibits employment of children under 14 years of age and places restrictions on the employment of children under the age of 16; however, child labor is a serious problem. A national child labor survey released in October reported that an estimated 17.7 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in some form of child labor.

Mandatory overtime in the FTZ factories is a common practice. Workers also reported that their employers locked factory doors with chains so they could not leave, and took incentive pay away from or fired those who refused to work overtime.


Resource 5

Country Profile—Guatemala

FAST FACTS
- Guatemala is in Central America. It borders the Caribbean Sea, between Honduras and Belize and the Pacific Ocean, between El Salvador and Mexico.
- It is almost 109,000 square km, and nearly the size of Tennessee.
- The climate is tropical.
- The population is 13.3 million (July 2002 estimate).
- 60% of the population lives below the poverty line by Guatemalan standards.
- The unemployment rate is 7.5%. The literacy rate is 63.6%.

HOURLY WAGE
The National Labor Committee reports that the approximate hourly base wage in Guatemala is between 37 and 50 cents. The living wage has been determined to be $1.18 per hour.

LABOR SNAPSHOT
The legal minimum wage for a regular eight-hour day is $3.93 (30.46 quetzals) for agricultural work and $4.32 (32.82 quetzals) for service, industrial, and government sector work.

The minimum wage was not sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and his/her family. According to the UNDP, at least 80% of the population, including approximately 60% of the employed, lives below the poverty line. Occupational health and safety standards are inadequate. Many of the provisions of the applicable law—dating to 1957—are archaic, making enforcement problematic.

Maquilas often obligate women to reveal whether they are pregnant as a condition of employment, either through questions on job applications, in interviews, or through physical examinations. Approximately 80% of the 80,000 maquila workers are women.

According to the National Statistics Institute, from 1998 to 1999 there were 326,095 children doing paid work...An estimated 80% of work accidents involve 15 to 18 year old workers who lack proper safety training...The [International Labor Organization’s] International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor is active in the fireworks industry. The Labor Ministry estimated that approximately 10 percent of the children in this industry work illegally in factories.


Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice

“As consumers, believers can promote social justice or injustice. In an affluent culture that suggests that what we have defines who we are, we can live more simply. When we purchase goods and services, we can choose to support companies that defend human life, treat workers fairly, protect creation, and respect other basic moral values at home and abroad. We can also make conscious efforts to consume less.”

United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, 1998, p. 6
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Justice and Service Resources

Justice Education Resource:

Youth Ministry Access – www.youthministryaccess.org
The Center for Ministry Development has created this on-line subscription service to provide fully-developed youth ministry events and programs. The site contains over 25 justice education programs, and includes designs for both high school and middle school youth.

Ministry Resources for Justice and Service – www.smp.org
This book from Saint Mary’s Press contains fully developed justice education programs as well as information and ideas for infusing justice and service into youth ministry.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development – www.usccb.org/cchd/
This department of the USCCB is focused on the needs of the poor and disenfranchised in the United States. Their website offers many good resources for parishes focusing on justice issues – including a web-media tour of poverty.

Catholic Relief Services – www.catholicrelief.org
CRS is the organization that provides humanitarian aid and social programs to foreign countries. They have excellent (free) resources for helping groups explore justice issues (Food Fast, Operation Rice Bowl.) Their website also provides good information about other countries and the current situations that exist there.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – www.usccb.org
Department of Social Development and World Peace
This is the website and offices of the US Catholic Bishops. Information about specific programs for dealing with justice issues can be found within this office. You can also look to the Publications office for valuable materials—specifically, Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions.

Additional Resources for Service and Justice

Catholic Workers Movements – www.catholicworkers.org
Catholic Worker was founded by Dorothy Day and has been working with the poor of the United States for over 70 years. They have resources and information, and there might be a Catholic Worker house in your local area.

Bread for the World - www.bread.org
This organization works to feel the world. They offer resources and accept charitable contributions.
Free the Children – www.freethechildren.com
This international organization was started by a young person to respond to the crisis of child labor throughout the world. It has expanded its mission to include helping young people throughout the world.

Heifer Project International- www.heifer.org
The Heifer Project provides animals to people in poverty throughout the world so that they can become self-sufficient. Parishes or individuals can purchase an animal (or a whole ark) that will then be given to others.

SouperBowl of Caring - www.souperbowl.org
This is an ecumenical project that invites young people to collect money of Superbowl Sunday and then donate the money to local charities. All money collected on that day gets reported to the Souperbowl of Caring organization so that a total can be announced. Free resources are available to help publicize the event.

**Summer Service Learning:**

Young Neighbors in Actions – www.cmdnet.org
A Catholic Service Week—focused on direct service combined with reflection on Catholic Social Teaching and prayer.

Catholic Heart Workcamp - - www.heartworkcamp.com
A Catholic Service Week—focused on direct service combined with prayer and large group activities.

Group Workcamp – www.grouppublishing.com
A non-denominational service week—focused on direct service combined with prayer and large group activities.

YouthWorks Mission – www.youthworks.com
A non-denominational service week—focused on direct service combined with reflection on service and prayer.

Nazareth Farm - www.nazarethfarm.org
A Catholic Mission that offers week-long service experiences for teenagers and year-long volunteer opportunities for young adults.
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
Bless them with your guiding grace
as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
that they may believe in themselves
and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
in the journey of faith we walk with them,
in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

Content of the program   1  2  3  4  5
Handout Packet           1  2  3  4  5
Presentation             1  2  3  4  5
Length of workshop       1  2  3  4  5

Anything else?
Hiring and Supporting a Coordinator of Youth Ministry

This workshop assists a parish in preparing to hire a Coordinator of Youth Ministry (CYM). The session includes creating a job description and budget for the CYM, a guide through the search process, and a plan for orientation, support, and supervision.
Acknowledgements

Excerpt from *The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization – Called to be Witnesses and Storytellers* Copyright © 1993 National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Washington, D.C. Used with permission.

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Opening Prayer

Listen: A Prayer of Gratitude

O Divine Gift-giver,
I stand beneath the endless waterfall
of your abundant gifts to me.

I thank you especially for all the blessings of life,
the most precious of all your gifts to me.

I thank you, ever generous One,
for clothing to wear,
for food and drink to nourish my body,
that you have bestowed upon me.

I thank you for the many joys of my life,
for family and friends,
For work that gives to me a sense of purpose
And invests my life with meaning.

I thank you as well
for the sufferings and trial of my life,
which are also gifts
and which, together with my mistakes,
are among my most important teachers.

Grant that I may never greet a new day
without the awareness of some gift for which to give you thanks.

And may constant thanksgiving
be my song of perpetual praise to you.

Father, a needy one stands before you,
I that sing am that one.

Native American Omaha Indian

Respond

Share with a partner a gift that you bring to your parish team. What is special about you? How much do you trust in God to use your gifts within this youth ministry initiative?

Closing

Spoken together
O Christ Jesus,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
in Your protecting love
and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to You,
we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.

By St. Ignatius of Loyola, 1491-1556
Youth Ministry Training In-Services provided by the OYYAM in the Diocese of Helena
Hungers of Youth

The Hunger for Meaning and Purpose
One of the great fears of young people is that much of life simply does not matter, that life is not grounded in meaning. They fear that their families, their relationships, their church, their future and even their lives do not matter. One challenge of youth ministry, therefore, is to provide a Gospel vision of life that identifies and calls into question the false messages contemporary society gives about what it means to be human. Meaning and purpose are found in the call to love, which is the fullness of our humanity, centered in God and expressed in the love of others.

The Hunger for Connection
Young people have a strong need for relationships, for connecting with others on a variety of levels. It is within these connections that love and acceptance are experienced. Ideally, the family is the primary and foundational experience of such connectedness. It is within a healthy family that a child first experiences love, security, and belonging. Young people, then, move toward further connection with their peer group and in individual relationships where acceptance and friendship are experienced. Eventually, young people come to see themselves as connected to the larger communities of school, church, and society. A major challenge we face, therefore, is to provide a faith community of acceptance, belonging, and welcome, where young people can hear the Good News proclaimed and see the Gospel lived out.

The Hunger for Recognition
Young people experience a fundamental need to feel worthwhile and important. This need is met when they experience the attention and interest of others, providing the basis for self-esteem and self-confidence. Young people need to be affirmed in their goodness and in their giftedness. They need to be appreciated and loved. They need to be listened to. Through relationships of trust, acceptance, and understanding, through experiences of feeling connected to others and to the community, through knowing that God, indeed, pays attention and cares for them, young people feel better about themselves, come to self-acceptance, and are enabled to reach out to others.

The Hunger for Justice
The hunger for justice is perhaps the least obvious of the hungers of young people, but still very present in the lives of many of them. From the earliest days of childhood, we hear the cry of “That’s not fair!” There is an innate sense and desire for justice and fairness in young people. They are quick to point out the inequities of life in the distribution of good, possessions, and even opportunities. Directly and indirectly, they experience violence, hatred, and hurt. Our challenge is to not let this hunger for justice succumb to the societal pressures of materialism, consumerism, and individualism. The Gospel calls us to a vision where all have access to the goods and resources of the world, where the poor and the marginalized become a priority, and where justice and peace are signs that the reign of God has broken through.
The Hunger for the Holy

Research demonstrates clearly that many young people experience a spiritual vacuum. They often see a gap between professed belief and actual practice in the faith community, and they frequently experience a church whose teachings seem to be out of touch with their real, lived situations. However, young people continue to search for a faith that makes sense, that provides direction and meaning, and that challenges. They are looking for a language to help them understand their experiences of God, searching for ways to deepen their experiences of the sacred, and seeking a community of people with whom to journey. Young people are looking for a worthwhile adventure. Joining with Jesus in work on behalf of the reign of God he proclaimed is that adventure. Our challenge is to be a community of believers and disciples that invites, welcomes, loves, and involves young people in building up the reign of God.

(The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization – Called to be Witnesses and Storytellers – National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 1993. Used with permission.)

Assessing our Needs

What do you think are the needs of young people within the parish? Their families?

What should the parish be doing for young people that it currently isn’t? Their families?
An Overview of Youth Ministry

Definition of Catholic Youth Ministry
“Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.”

Three Goals of Catholic Youth Ministry
- **Goal 1:** To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. *(RTV, p. 9)*
- **Goal 2:** To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. *(RTV, p. 11)*
- **Goal 3:** To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. *(RTV, p. 15)*

Settings for Youth Ministry
There are four settings where youth can be ministered to:
- **Youth** in context, as gifted and growing
- **Families** as domestic church, as central and capable
- **Parish** as a responsible, resourceful community
- **Wider Community** as collaborators and resources

Components of a Comprehensive Youth Ministry
The components describe specific areas of the mission of the Church that work together to provide ministry with adolescents. “These components provide a framework for the Catholic community to respond to the needs of young people and to involve young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community.” *(RTV, p. 26)*

- **Advocacy:** Interpreting the needs of young people, standing up for young people, both as individuals and as a youth community.
- **Catechesis:** Deepening the faith of young people through teaching and reflection—working towards transformation.
- **Community Life:** Building community, not just between young people, but with their families and engaging youth in the broader parish community.
- **Evangelization:** Proclaiming the Good News and inviting youth into relationship with Jesus Christ through ongoing witness.
- **Justice and Service:** Engaging young people in helping and serving other people, and understanding the Gospel call to justice through education and reflection.
- **Leadership Development:** Inviting, training, and supporting adults and young people into leadership for youth ministry and with the broader parish community.
- **Pastoral Care:** Providing prevention programs for youth and families, caring for those in crisis, and providing guidance during times of decisions and moral choices.
- **Prayer and Worship:** Helping youth to develop an individual prayer life, experience a variety of communal prayers, and involving youth in the sacramental life of the Church.
Flexible and Adaptable Programming
“The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing ministry programming for adolescents:
• a diversity of program settings
• age-specific programs for young and older adolescents
• family-centered programs for the entire family, for parents, for foster parents, for grandparents raising children, adolescents
• intergenerational parish programs
• community-wide programs
• a balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of comprehensive ministry…
• a variety of approaches to reach all adolescents and their families, including parish, school, and community-wide programs
• small-group programs and small ecclesial community experiences
• home-based programs, activities, and resources
• one-on-one and mentoring programs and activities
• independent or self-directed programs
• a variety of scheduling options and program settings to respond to the reality of the busy lives and commitments of adolescents and their families
• use of current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation” (RTV, p. 25).
• non-gathered strategies (birthday cards, study kits, newsletters, bulletin boards celebrating youth accomplishments, etc.)

How would hiring a Coordinator of Youth Ministry benefit the parish and the young people?
A Reflection on Goals

From what you know about youth ministry, what is essential?

If we were only able to accomplish three things in the next two years, what would you want them to be?

If you could wave a magic wand and have everything you wanted, what would youth ministry look like in five years?

How do you see the Coordinator of Youth Ministry helping to accomplish your goals?
Recommended Responsibilities for Coordinator of Youth Ministry

“Ministry coordinators have a central role in facilitating the people, programming, and resources of the faith community on behalf of a comprehensive ministry effort with adolescents. Coordination is stewardship—overseeing the resources of the community so that they are used wisely in ministry with adolescents. Ministry coordinators alert the whole community to its responsibility for young people, draw forth the community’s gifts and resources, and encourage and empower the community to minister with young people. Of special importance to effective ministry with adolescents is cooperation among the leaders, ministries, and programs in a faith community as they work together in a common effort to achieve the three goals of the Church’s ministry with youth” (Renewing the Vision, pp. 24-25).

1. The Coordinator facilitates the development of a comprehensive ministry with young and older adolescents.
   - leading the core team in planning and coordinating programs and services for adolescents
   - facilitating the planning, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive plan for ministry with adolescents
   - establishing a collaborative relationship with members of the pastoral staff and parish leaders
   - developing and supervising the program budget.
   - assuring that legal and moral responsibilities are provided for within the context of the parish program.

2. The Coordinator promotes the faith formation of youth.
   - developing and implementing evangelization and outreach programs
   - developing and implementing catechetical programs and sacrament preparation.
   - developing and implementing justice education and service projects
   - promoting active youth worship including inclusive and participative liturgy and prayer opportunities

3. The Coordinator acts as an advocate and link for youth.
   - interpreting the needs of youth to the parish staff, parish leaders, and the community
   - facilitating the development of community among young people, their families, their parish and the local community
   - supporting families in their role of promoting healthy adolescent development and faith growth
   - partnering with schools and the civic community to promote healthy adolescent development and positive values in all young people
   - promoting the pastoral care of youth and their families
4. **The Coordinator recruits, prepares, and supports adult and youth leaders in youth ministry.**
   - creating a leadership system for inviting, preparing, supporting, and supervising leaders
   - promoting the spiritual formation of youth and adult leaders
   - developing job descriptions and recruitment processes
   - facilitating the training and support of leaders
   - providing feedback on leadership performance and continuous support for leaders

5. **The Coordinator empowers youth for Christian ministry.**
   - facilitating the training and formation of youth as leaders.
   - providing opportunities for youth involvement in the ministries of the local church and in service to the wider community

Coordinator of Youth Ministry – Job Description

Title: Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Reports to:
(Who will be in charge of providing supervision and support to this person?)

Primary Areas:
(What are the essential areas that this person will be focused on?)

Job Responsibilities:
(What are some key categories that you would develop – using the Recommended Responsibilities (pages 8-9) and the sample job descriptions.)

Qualifications:
(What needs to be true about this person? What qualifications are you willing to help them get?)
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth.
   Bless them with your guiding grace
   as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love,
   that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives,
   that they may believe in themselves
   and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy
   that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow
   in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people,
   in the ministry opportunities we offer to them,
   in the journey of faith we walk with them,
   in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Engaging Youth in Liturgy

This workshop helps parish leaders explore ways that they can more fully involve adolescents in the Eucharistic celebrations of the parish. The workshop focuses on ways that youth ministry can prepare young people for their involvement in liturgy and ways that the parish community can ensure that young people are engaged, involved, and welcomed at Mass.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Cheryl Tholcke
(916) 451-1551
cheryl@CMDnet.org
My Hopes for Youth Participation in Liturgy

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the following questions.

What would your parish look and feel like if young people were more involved in liturgy?

Why is it important to you that youth are involved and engaged in liturgy?

What are some of the difficulties your parish faces in engaging youth in liturgy?

What are some of your parish’s strengths in liturgy?

What gifts would youth bring to parish liturgy if they were more engaged?
What the Church Says About Liturgy

Liturgy is the action of Christ and his body, the Church. Liturgy literally means the work of the people. In liturgy we remember and make present the paschal mystery of Christ. Liturgy is an act of communication: God with us, and us with God and with one another.

From the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

- Every liturgy has as its focus, its “theme,” its heart, the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ: “Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory!” (#5)
- Liturgy works by means of “signs perceptible to the senses.” The fact that we use bread and wine, how we use bread and wine, and the quality of the bread and wine are important. (#7)
- In the liturgy, we encounter Christ in four ways: in the assembly, in the person of the ordained minister, in the proclamation of the scripture, and in the consecrated elements. (#7)
- Liturgy is the summit and fount of the church’s life. It is the church’s “peak experience” as well as the source from which all the grace and power of the church flows. Through the liturgy, we are sanctified and God is glorified. (#10)
- Full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful in liturgical celebrations “is called for by the very nature of the liturgy and is the aim to be considered before all else.” (#14)
- Pastors, and all liturgical ministers, must be thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy and promote active participation, both internally and externally. (#14)
- Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration: readings, psalms, prayers, collects and songs are scriptural in origin or inspired by the word, and from the scriptures the signs derive their meaning. (#24)
- Contemporary celebration should be characterized by noble simplicity—clear signs not needing much explanation. (#34)
- The liturgy is open to adaptation to serve various cultures and people so long as the spirit of the liturgy is maintained. (#37-40)

Liturgical celebrations involve the whole person: body, mind, senses, imagination, emotions, memory. Gesture, posture, eye contact, procession, and movement are important considerations. (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, #5, 55-62)

(From “Preparing for Liturgy: Minding your P’s and Q’s,” by Pat Kerwin, Liturgy 90, May/June 1999.)
What Young People Say About Liturgy

Vibrant liturgy engages the whole mind, body, and heart and connects us more deeply with community and strengthens our faith.

From the interviews . . .

- “...David praises the Lord leaping and dancing.” The reason I know that is because of an ‘80s movie but, I know that is in there. Mass is supposed to be a sensual experience. We should be praising God with our entire bodies. With our hands, we need to clap, we need to sing. Mass should be joyful.

- St. Teresa of Avila said, “Lord save me from stone-faced saints.” Saints are joyful people, and I think we need to be more like them. God is on the altar, and if God walked right into this room, I think all of us would be amazed, and we would want to worship him with all of our body, with all of our senses, our mind, our being. And that’s what I think we’re trying to get at during the Teen Mass, but I think the adults want us to remember where we are.

- Do you guys hold hands during the “Our Father?” Yes, we are still allowed to. I think it’s just important to have that sense of community and I think it’s really established at the way we celebrate Mass… I think that if you don’t experience God together, then you can’t. I don’t know how to say it in words, but it’s like you have to experience it together in order to be able to bring it out of yourself. Things are easier in numbers.

Music uniquely adds to our ability to participate and engage fully in the liturgy.

- I am a very musical person so I think that is why it’s a touchstone for me. But if you draw people in that way and then you pray together and it’s like—it’s such a unique experience…

- …our voices had lifted them up because everybody in the choir was crying too because we felt that God was helping us sing his praises.

- There are a lot of elderly people who go to our church and I will never forget the looks we go. It was like, “What are you doing? You’re clapping.” I was scared of these little old ladies. Our last song was “Shine Jesus Shine,” and when it was over, one of them came over and she said, “That’s what we needed!”
Leadership in liturgical ministry helps us uncover our gifts and experience affirmation for them, connects us to the community, and gives us a deeper understanding of what’s being celebrated.

From the interviews . . .

- The way I interact and I strengthen and I show my faith is I play music. At church I go up there and I play bongos. I play drums, and it’s just, the vibes I get when I’m done from the people—I helped make these people get up and dance, and shout, and clap their hands. It’s this crazy vibe I get when everybody just has big smiles on their faces at the end of the song. Everyone is enjoying Mass.

- …at this church now I also do lectoring. It’s not really a youth lector. I don’t think there are any other youth lectors. Being one of the only youth lectors, it feels important because you get to represent the youth and their speaking skills with adults that are working there…

- I am a Lector and at our Lector training we had an awesome speaker and he told us that we are “en persona Christi.” It’s not only the priest or the Eucharistic Ministers that are doing that, it’s us too because we are reading God’s word.

    Interviewer: What does that mean, “en persona Christi?”

It means “in place of Christ.” They can see you and Christ is invisible. They can see Christ through you. Our job is to get people to look out of the book so that when we read they get something out of listening to use more than just reading the words. And the last time I read at Church I think I kind of got that a little bit because after Mass one of the old ladies came up to me and told me that they should have me read every day. So that was—it was very touching.

(From The National Symposium on Effective Youth Ministry Practices in Catholic Parishes Project, a research project of the Center for Ministry Development and Saint Mary’s Press, in collaboration with the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.)
Full, Conscious, and Active Participation

The Church earnestly desires all the faithful to be led to the full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people…is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #14

Promoting Active Participation
Help Youth to Know the WHO, HOW, and WHY:

WHO
Liturgy celebrates our relationship with the God who gathers us as a community.
Help youth participate more fully in liturgy by helping them grow in their personal prayer life and by helping them integrate more fully into the community.

WHAT
Liturgy uses ritual and symbol to acknowledge the larger reality of our life in Christ.
Help youth participate more fully in liturgy by familiarizing them with the symbols and rituals of our faith.

HOW
Within liturgy, we pray through song, silence, composed prayers, gestures, and postures.
Help youth participate more fully in liturgy by helping them be comfortable with silence and singing, and by helping them know the prayers, the postures, and the actions of prayer.

WHY
Liturgy gathers us to listen to the word, and to feast at the table. Liturgy sends us forth to be Christ’s presence in the world.
Help youth learn to listen to the word and apply it to their lives today. Help them live and love the Eucharist. Help youth experience being sent out in the dismissal to live their baptism through service and faithful living!

By their baptism, youth have a right and responsibility to participate in liturgy. When they are not present, we are diminished as a community and deprived of the gifts that they bring. As leaders in ministry with youth, we can help youth take their place in the worshipping community. We can:

• promote participation by preparing youth for liturgy
• prepare liturgies that include youth
• prepare the community for youth involvement
Preparing Youth for Liturgy

There are a number of things that youth ministry can do to help prepare youth for liturgy. This includes:

Promote prayer within all ministry with youth
- Invite youth to help plan prayer experiences for their peers and the broader community.
- Infuse prayer into all ministry programs and promote a variety of prayer styles.
- Promote a personal prayer life by helping youth experience and know different prayer styles and encouraging youth to make prayer a regular part of their lives.
- Provide creative prayer experiences. Youth will be more ready to worship with adults if they are comfortable praying with each other. Prayer should be regular, predictable, and draw extensively from young people’s life experiences.

Use silence, symbols, and rituals within youth ministry
- Young people will only understand symbol and ritual and be comfortable with silence if they have experience with it. Prayer within youth ministry should include these three elements.
- Discuss non-religious symbols and rituals within youth ministry so that young people begin to recognize how symbolic and ritualistic their lives are and can become more aware of the religious symbols and rituals that are a part of liturgy.

Bring the Sunday readings into a young person’s life during the week
- Utilize prayer forms, such as *lectio divina*.
- Utilize the themes from Sunday readings for gatherings during the week and for retreats.
- Provide resources that help youth and their families prepare for the Sunday readings at home.

Provide intentional preparation for youth participation in liturgy
- Provide a “walk-through” liturgy, where a priest or other liturgy expert explains some of the rituals, symbols, and movements of liturgy within the context of an actual Mass.
- Provide a tour of the church, familiarizing youth with the worship space and the symbols imbedded within it.
- Provide young people with different experiences of liturgy—at different parishes, within different cultures, and within the youth community (at the conclusion of a retreat, on a trip, etc.).
- Promote community within which young people can participate in liturgy. Going to Mass alone can be difficult for people of all ages. Encourage families to attend together. Additionally, create opportunities for youth who come without their families to sit together.
- Provide families with ideas of how to support the involvement of their child(ren) in liturgy.
Invite youth to participate in liturgy

- You can’t involve teens in liturgy if they don’t want to be there. Therefore, the starting point is not education, but invitation. Young people should receive a regular and inviting invitation to not only attend liturgy, but to participate as well.
- It is far easier for youth to participate in liturgy if they believe they have a gift to bring and a reason for being there. The community’s acceptance of the gifts of adolescence—youth, idealism, enthusiasm, and questioning—is very important to young people’s self-understanding. A community that accepts all of these gifts will attract youth involvement in liturgy.
- Apprentice youth in liturgical ministries.

(Material above was created from two sources; materials written by Thomas East, Center for Ministry Development and materials written by Thomas Tomaszek, Oregon Catholic Press.)
Prepare Liturgies for and with Youth

There are a number of things that youth ministry and the broader parish can do to prepare liturgies with and for youth. This includes:

Pay attention to the needs of youth within all liturgies where youth are present.

- Attend to the Principles of Vibrant Worship with Youth (*From Age to Age*, #61-75)
  - Effective preaching of the word
  - Youthful spirit in music and song
  - Visually dynamic symbols and actions
  - Interactive and communal dimension
- Be intentional about welcoming youth

Prepare occasional liturgies for youth

- Celebrate liturgies well at youth events. These events provide an opportunity to pay greater attention to the life experiences and issues young people bring to worship.
- Liturgy celebrated within a small and trusted community can provide new meaning to the experience of liturgy. Encourage young people to bring that new experience of liturgy to their regular Sunday worship.

Involve youth in preparing liturgies for the parish community

- Involve young people in liturgical committees on a regular basis or for occasional liturgies (World Youth Day, confirmation, etc.)
- Involve young people in liturgical ministries in the regular schedule of the parish or masses where young people take all or most of the liturgical roles.
- Involve young people in preparing non-Eucharistic liturgies and prayer services for the community.

Involve and apprentice youth in liturgical ministries

- Create a safe and welcoming environment where young people can share their gifts and enthusiasm.
- Provide age-appropriate training for liturgical ministries.
- Provide a mentor for youth who will help them “learn the ropes.”

(Material above was created from two sources; materials written by Thomas East, Center for Ministry Development and materials written by Thomas Tomaszek, Oregon Catholic Press.)
Prepare the Community for Youth Participation

“...if parishes are to be worthy of the loyalty and active participation of youth, they will need to become ‘youth friendly’ communities in which youth have a conspicuous presence in parish life. There are communities that value young people—welcoming them into their midst; listening to them; responding to their needs; supporting them with prayer, time, facilities, and money.”

(Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 13.)

If parishes truly desire young people to participate fully within liturgy, the community may need to make room for young people’s involvement. Everyone wants young people at Church, but not everyone is comfortable making the changes necessary that could ensure their involvement. To help parish communities prepare for youth participation, consider:

Becoming a “youth friendly” parish
- Make sure that young people are welcome at all parish events, especially Mass.
- Involve young people in liturgy and increase their visibility at other parish events.
- Promote youth leadership on parish committees and within leadership structures.

Help the parish understand how to include youth
- Educate parishioners about youth and about the value of youth ministry.
- Preach the gift of adolescents. Develop a positive campaign to help show the contributions and achievements of youth.
- Give parishioners ideas for simple ways that they can support youth.
- Invite all adults to be intentional about welcoming young people at all parish events, but especially through their hospitality at liturgy.
- Model youth involvement in all parish committees, ministries, and leadership structures.

Promote youth involvement
- Listen to youth and help the community hear youth’s concerns and dreams.
- Build relationships with and provide resources for leaders who can influence youth participation.
- Create a pastoral plan that promotes “full, active, and conscious participation.”

Identifying lobbyists
- Change is always difficult. Identify some leaders at the parish who can help communicate the value of any changes that are being made and their support for these changes.
- Promote changes as value-driven—the desire to promote the “full, active, and conscious participation” of all.

(Material above was created from two sources; materials written by Thomas East, Center for Ministry Development and materials written by Thomas Tomaszek, Oregon Catholic Press.)
What Teens Can Do to Improve Their Experience of Worship

1. **Get involved in a ministry.**
   Volunteer for a liturgical ministry – lector, Eucharistic minister, usher, altar server, music, or choir. Give the time you can to enhance your involvement.

2. **Get dressed up. Make it special.**
   Sometimes we get too casual. Make an occasion of going to Church – because our clothes can make a different in our attitude about something.

3. **Tell some people you will pray for them—and then do it.**
   Thinking about and helping others is a way of participating. Go to Mass so that you have intentional time to prayer for yourself and others.

4. **Attend with a friend. Make Mass a social event.**
   Going to church alone is hard. Invite your family and/or friends to go to Mass with you, and then go out to breakfast afterwards.

5. **Go regularly—make it a habit.**
   As with all things, patterns help us do things we know are important even when we don’t feel like it at that moment. If you get out of the habit, it will be harder to go.

6. **Think up your own homily.**
   If the priest isn’t speaking to your own experience, imagine that you have a few minutes to speak about the day’s gospel. What would you want to say?

7. **Say the prayers, sing the songs—do what Catholics do.**
   Going to Mass is not enough, you have to participate to really be involved. Sing the songs, say the prayers, pay attention.

8. **Sit in the same area of the church—and not the back row!**
   People tend to sit in the same area. If you want to feel like you belong at Church, consider sitting in the same area each week. Over time you will develop a relationship with the people sitting near you, if only in the smile and handshake you exchange at the sign of peace.

(Copyright © 1995, Thomas Tomaszek)
Preparing for Liturgies with Youth

Liturgy is the central prayer of our faith and “the source and summit of the church’s life” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #7). Given the importance of this prayer and the way this prayer celebrates our relationship with our loving God, there are important considerations to keep in mind as we prepare.

1. Liturgies are Prepared, Not Planned
Liturgy is the central prayer of the Catholic faith. Readings have been selected, churches have been built, liturgical ministers trained, and a structure is already in place that guides our prayer. Liturgy is already planned. When we prepare for liturgy, we work within liturgy’s intended structure, form, and purpose.

2. Prepare Liturgy for the Community Gathered
Jesus’ death and resurrection is the theme of every liturgy. The paschal mystery is celebrated each time we gather. For that reason, there is no need to select a different theme. We should, however, focus the liturgy for the specific group that will be celebrating the liturgy. To discern our prayer, we consider the people who are gathering for prayer and the readings and rites already planned for the liturgy. Thomas Tomaszek, a consultant in the area of youth and liturgy, describes this relationship as a traditional recipe with fresh ingredients. Liturgy, like a traditional recipe, has been handed down to us and is entrusted to us in a way that calls us to be faithful to its form. Our very lives today are the fresh ingredients that make this recipe come alive. A liturgy that is celebrated at the end of a youth retreat will reflect the sense of community, shared faith experience, and growing relationship with God that was experienced over the course of the weekend. It will have a different look and feel to it than a First Communion liturgy. The structure of the liturgy remains the same, but each liturgy should reflect the specific season it is celebrated in and the community for which it is prepared.

3. Stay Focused on the Liturgy
When preparing or liturgy, our main objective is the shared prayer of the community. We make choices and select from options within the pattern of liturgy. It is very important in making these choices that we trust the liturgy and choose in such a way that the community can pray this prayer and participate fully. This means that we need to keep the main thing the main thing. If we draw too much attention to some elements, we do so at the expense of the central mysteries of liturgy. Liturgy has a wide variety of elements—processions, songs, silence, shared responses, including sung prayers, and even silence. It even has a variety of gestures—the Sign of the Cross, kneeling, bowing, etc. With this variety, there is no need to add things to the liturgy that will take away from the elements that already exist. Sometimes we can get so creative that Mass becomes unrecognizable from its original form. When preparing for liturgy, choose from all the variety that already exists and prepare those elements well. Prepare the ministers, the environment, and the music. When preparation is done well, it will help young people to participate will in liturgy, both the one that you are planning for and all that follow.
4. Prepare Yourself

There are three aspects to preparing for liturgy preparation. The first is preparing yourself by prayerfully reading the readings of the day and reflecting on the liturgy that you are preparing by using commentaries. Second, continue to expand your own understanding of liturgy. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the foundational documents and commentaries that can continue to help you grow in your knowledge of liturgy. Prior to beginning to prepare with a team, it is a good practice to set aside some time to read an article or review a document. Third, prior to beginning the preparation process, meet with the presider and any other liturgical ministers who are impacted. When you meet, provide an overview of your plans for the liturgy preparation process. Find out the presider’s preferences for this liturgy, and discuss the liturgy and any factors that would affect your planning.

Commentary Resources:
For a commentary book, consider *Days of the Lord: The Liturgical Year* series (Collegeville: MN: The Liturgical Press). This series of books is often used by liturgists and homilists in preparation. A simpler resource is *Living Liturgy—Sundays and Solemnities, Year A, B, or C*, also published by The Liturgical Press. A free online resource that includes commentary, spirituality articles, and prayers can be found from the Center for Liturgy at St. Louis University at [www.liturgy.slu.edu](http://www.liturgy.slu.edu).
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they may believe in themselves and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Anything else?
Empowering Youth for Parish Leadership

This workshop helps parishes develop strategies for involving youth in leadership within youth ministry and other parish ministries. Participants will explore ways to open up parish organizations and ministries to youth and to prepare the adult community for youth involvement.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

Gathering

Invite the participants to take a moment to think of the people in their lives who have invited them into leadership within the Church. Tell the participants that they will have an opportunity to name these people aloud during the prayer.

After a minute, begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Holy Spirit, help us to feel your presence in our midst today—moving through and within us as we gather to focus our attention on our young leaders. Awaken us to their gifts and to the ways that you work through them. Help us remember our own mentors and the gift that they have been in our life. We ask you to sit with us today and guide our work. Amen.

Listen: Matthew 28:16-20

Respond: Invite each person to name aloud the person or persons who invited them into ministry. They can do so by saying, “I thank God for the gift of ___________ who first invited me to ________________.”

After each person speaks, the community should respond, “Thank you God for leading (name of person who shared) to us.”

Sending Forth:

Leader: Holy Spirit, please help us to follow the example of those who have called us into leadership. May we speak your invitation in our own words to those of our community who are longing to connect with the Church more deeply. Help us to invite the young and old, and everyone in between, to share their gifts and grow within this community. We make this prayer in your name. Amen.

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.
Leadership is Making a Difference for Good

Leadership is making a difference for good...
- Leaders use their time, energy, and talent to help others.

Leaders are made not born…
- Leaders take it upon themselves to grow and develop their leadership skills.
- Leaders choose to commit themselves to making a difference for good.

Leaders do a variety of things to accomplish a goal...
- Leaders get things started.
  initiate, invite, create, dream, envision

- Leaders keep things going.
  encourage, affirm, challenge, solve problems, remember

- Leaders make other people feel valuable.
  listen, understand, affirm, value differences

- Leaders get people to work together.
  promote teamwork, resolve conflicts, build a shared vision, dream

- Leaders describe a goal and a way to get there.
  rally people around a cause, make things seem possible, help people feel committed to something

Effective leaders...

- Need other people’s gifts.
  open to ideas, value diversity, humble

- Focus on service to others and on the goal to be achieved.
  focus on similarities, sharing credit, helping others look good

- Use projects to build people.
  value others, don’t use people just to get the job done

Christian Leaders…

- Try to see the world through Jesus’ eyes and learn to respond as Jesus would in their actions and choices.
Are We Ready?

Please assess how well your parish is doing:
1 = currently, this is not true
2 = we are working in this direction
3 = this is an area of strength for us

1  2  3 We know that it takes a whole parish—every ministry is open to young people and accepting of their gifts.

1  2  3 We keep our eyes open for hidden and emerging talents among young people and invite them to use them in youth ministry or another parish ministry.

1  2  3 We are intentional about inviting, training, mentoring, and acknowledging young people in their roles.

1  2  3 We are patient with the young people as they are developing gifts and discovering talents.

1  2  3 We are open to the insights, ideas, and wisdom of youth. We not only ask them to contribute, but we value their contribution.

1  2  3 Young people serve in many behind-the-scenes ways. We praise and acknowledge these contributions as much as the up-front roles that young people play.

1  2  3 For every challenge that is met by a young person, we replace it with a new challenge. We don’t pigeon-hole young people into a role without giving them opportunities to try new things.

1  2  3 We are not afraid of failure—our own or a young person’s.

1  2  3 Youth leadership development is a commitment and a promise to young people. We take this job seriously.

What does this tell you about your parish’s readiness for involving youth in leadership?
Involving Youth in Leadership

Step One: Redefine Leadership
Leadership is making a difference for good.

Leadership can mean speaking in front of people, organizing activities, and being a role model, but it might also be something as simple as helping out another person or making the new person feel welcome. When we limit our understanding of leadership, we limit the ways that young people can make a difference in their own unique way.

Step Two: Look for Leadership Opportunities
- Find opportunities where you can involve young people as leaders in youth ministry programs and leadership structures. (See Youth Ministry Leadership Opportunities, page 9, for ideas.)
- Look for ways that young people can be leaders in behind-the-scenes leadership and use specialized skills (computer, music, etc.) to make a difference
- Find opportunities within the parish community where young people can serve in leadership roles. (See Parish Leadership Opportunities, page 10, for ideas.)

Step Three: Prepare the Parish for Youth Involvement
- Before asking young people to join into parish groups/ministries, make sure that the groups are ready for them.
- Don’t expect all adults to know how to work with young people. Do what is necessary to get both the young people and adults ready for this new collaboration. (See Preparing Adults and Youth, page 11.)

Step Four: Invite
- Most people are never invited into leadership, and therefore do not see themselves as leaders. Always be on the look-out for talents and skills that can be put to good use. Ask. Ask again. Ask a third time.
- If someone is not interested in the first thing you invite them to be a part of, use it as an opportunity to find out more about what they are interested in, and then find a better match to their interests and gifts.

Step Five: Provide Orientation and Training
- Everyone needs an orientation to the leadership task they have been given. People need to know what is acceptable, what isn’t, how they might do their best, what to be careful of, etc. Never put someone in charge of something without giving them the information they need to do a good job.
- Training can make all the difference. Most jobs demand some level of training. Sometimes this is done through mentoring, sometimes through training programs. Match the needs with the right style of training.
- All young people can grow through leadership training—if not for use in the parish then for some other leadership role they have at school, work, or in the community. When
providing training, train broadly for common leadership skills like communication skills, planning, organization, working in groups, etc.

Step Six: Support, Nurture, Pray With

- As young people are learning new skills or entering into new leadership roles, they will likely need a great deal of support and affirmation to grow in confidence. Honor this need and provide ongoing feedback and support.
- Pray with young people and find other opportunities to nurture their faith, spirituality, and understanding of their own giftedness from God.
- Don’t be afraid to critique young people and their efforts. They will grow and improve if everything they attempt is greeted with affirmation. Use successes, missteps, and failures as opportunities for young people to learn and grow.
- In helping young people to grow in leadership, you need to be the coach that helps them learn and develop.

As a young person masters one skill, start the process all over. What else should you invite them to do? How will you prepare them for their role? How will you support them? And then, where else can their gifts be used?
Youth Ministry Leadership Opportunities

**Community / Socials:**
- Welcome others into the community
- Minister to peers by listening and referring other teens to resources
- Plan and organize Youth Ministry events / projects
- Plan and organize fund raising projects
- Help plan and run social events (dances, lock-ins, movie nights, etc.)
- Help plan and run sports events (volleyball, basketball, baseball, etc.)
- Help plan and run outdoor events (skiing, canoeing, camping, etc.)
- Help plan and run trips

**Service:**
- Plan service projects
- Organize and implement fundraisers for persons / projects in need

**Spirituality:**
- Help lead and present retreats for youth
- Help prepare other youth for Confirmation
- Help plan prayer opportunities for other youth

**Worship:**
- Help plan special youth liturgies
- Help plan youth reconciliation service
- Musician (instrument: ____________)

**Communications:**
- Write articles for youth newsletter
- Help edit and produce newsletter
- Help with artwork for newsletter, flyers
- Help with photography at events
- Write "news releases" for local papers
- Help design flyers and do publicity
- Help "get the word out" at your school
Parish Leadership Opportunities

**Community:**
- Welcome others into the community
- Plan and organize Junior High Ministry events / projects
- Participate and share leadership in parish fund raising projects
- Help plan and share leadership in parish events, such as parish picnic, parish festival, etc.
- Serve on the Parish Council or other parish leadership groups

**Service and Outreach:**
- Assist in service projects of the parish outreach team
- Assist in fundraising projects of the parish mission circle / team

**Spirituality:**
- Help plan and staff junior high retreats
- Help prepare children for Christian initiation (Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist)
- Help prepare children for First Communion and First Reconciliation
- Help plan and prepare for parish spirituality projects like: parish mission, Lenten and Advent programs, special events

**Worship / Liturgical Ministries:**
- Help prepare children’s liturgy
- Serve on the liturgy commission
- Eucharistic minister
- Lector
- Usher
- Minister of hospitality
- Helping with art and environment
- Sing in choir / Cantor
- Homebound Eucharistic Minister
- Musician (instrument: ____________)
- Help prepare petitions for Mass
- Write a brief article for the bulletin (or parish website) reflecting on the Sunday readings

**Religious Education:**
- Be a teacher
- Be a teacher's aide
- Be a co-teacher for junior high or high school
- Serve on the Religious Education /Youth Ministry Board
- Help in the office
- Assist with nursery/pre-school programs/children’s liturgy of the word

**Communications:**
- Help with photography at parish events
- Write articles for church bulletin or parish website
- Write "news releases" for local papers
- Help design flyers and do publicity for parish events
Preparing Adults and Youth

Involving Youth in Parish Ministries (Adult Preparation)…

- Prior to involvement, make sure that a young person’s parent(s) are aware of the invitation for involvement and the schedule/driving/other implications that their child’s involvement will entail for the family. Allow the family to make a decision about this opportunity.
- Invite more than one youth to be involved. Young people will be more comfortable if there is a peer also involved.
- Ask a current member of the committee/ministry to serve as a mentor to the young people on the committee/ministry. This person can provide a reminder phone call or email about a meeting, check in with the youth about their experience, and serve as a welcoming face at meetings/activities.
- Prior to involving young people in a parish ministry, invite the ministry to fill out the Parish Ministry Information Sheet.
- When young people arrive at the first few meetings, make sure that there is time for introduction of all members. Address specifically how young people are to address adults—by first names or Mr. and Mrs. or Ms.
- Provide an orientation for the young people—what information do they need to know? Who will help them get it? Are there any group norms that they should know about?
- Give the young person an opportunity to participate in the group’s work. Initially, this may mean being very specific in asking for their ideas and/or feedback. Ask if they are willing to take on at-home tasks. Invite them to get involved in group projects.
- Affirm a young person’s involvement. Also, don’t be afraid to provide feedback about ways that a young person can participate more appropriately or more fully. Young people (and adults) need feedback from others to grow and improve.
- Young people may be coming directly to a meeting from a sports practice or an after-school activity. Serving refreshments can be very helpful to a young person.
- When scheduling meetings, try not to conflict with the regular pattern of youth ministry/religious education gatherings.

Two questions to ask the group/ministry to ponder:
1. Are you willing to do things differently to help the young people get fully involved in your work? What is non-negotiable? What is open to change?
2. Are the meetings and activities life-giving to you? What could be changed prior to bringing in youth that would give them (and everyone) a better experience?

Involving Youth in Youth Ministry Leadership…

- Talk openly about language issues. Will you all go by first names? Is the term “kids” offensive to some participants? What about statements like “You’re too young to understand” or “You’re too old to understand”?
- Be intentional about taking youth seriously and be ready to redirect the conversation if adult participants talk too much, interrupt or ignore youth, or are critical or scolding.
- If youth are hesitant to speak up or tend to respond “I don’t know” to questions you are sure they have an answer for, help them identify the reasons for their reticence (e.g., fear
of put-downs, difficulty telling when people are done talking). Be encouraging when young people do speak up.

- Make sure to bring new people – youth or adults – up to speed. Review the group’s goals and provide pre-meeting training for newcomers about basics such as meeting structures, discussion ground rules, and agendas and reports.

- Be aware of the developmental needs of young people and accommodate the preferred learning styles of all group members. This may mean adding more experiential meeting elements, augmenting written and verbal communication with visual aids, and breaking into small groups.

- Start off with a game or a fun activity that helps all participants with the transition from other activities to the meeting.

- Involve youth in the process of the meeting. Have the young participants be part of the rotation of responsibilities for leading prayer or providing hospitality.

- Plan concrete projects, give youth responsibilities early, and expect achievement. Let youth learn from their mistakes, too.

- Be clear about each participant’s role and level of authority, the time and number of meetings, and the expected duration of the commitment.

- Have youth and adults periodically evaluate the role of youth (e.g., are youth being given only insignificant or peripheral tasks?).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Ministry Information Sheet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Ministry/Group:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key focus of the ministry/group:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry/Group leader’s name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting dates and times:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of group members:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason why the ministry/group desires involvement of youth:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who will mentor youth into their role:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any additional information:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they may believe in themselves and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998. All rights reserved.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content of the Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handout Packet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Workshop</td>
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</table>

Other comments:
Developing Volunteer Leaders for Youth Ministry

This workshop will assist parish leaders in recruiting, training, and supporting adults and youth for volunteer leadership in youth ministry. Included in this workshop are the tools necessary to create the roles descriptions that will assist these volunteers in knowing what they are being asked to do and will help parish leaders in recruiting volunteers based on interests and gifts.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Cheryl Tholcke
(916) 451-1551
cheryl@CMDnet.org
Opening Prayer

Gather
Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Listen
1 Corinthians 12:12-20

Respond
Litany of Thanks

All: We give you thanks Lord…
• for parents who share the faith with us.
• for people whose gifts are different than ours.
• for a multicultural community that reflects all the faces of God.
• for our own giftedness.

All: We ask your help Lord…
• in acknowledging our own strengths and weaknesses
• in inviting more people to contribute to the church
• in sharing the Good News with all we meet.

All: Lord, bless our time together…
• may we learn and grow in mutual trust.
• develop a stronger youth ministry in our parish.
• honor the many gifts you have given our community.

Send Forth
Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for gathering us together in service to the young church. May our ministry be a reflection of your great love and our work today in service to your Church. AMEN.
Questionnaire

In 1983, Marlene Wilson wrote a book called *How to Mobilize Volunteers* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Fortress, pgs 22-23). In the book, she made assertions related to the way that parishes interacted with parishioners, and some of the problems that those interactions caused. These questions are based on her assertions. Over 20 years have passed since she wrote her book. How are we doing now?

Based on your own experience at your parish, circle one of these options:
A = This is almost always true
S = This is sometimes true
N – This is almost never true

A S N Most volunteer ministry jobs in the church are not clearly defined.
A S N Most volunteer ministry jobs have no starting point and ending point. People fear that if they say “yes,” they will have the job for the rest of their lives.
A S N There is little openness to new ways of doing things. Volunteers are expected to keep the traditional ways of doing things.
A S N The time and talent surveys (or new parishioner packets) are immediately acted upon by the parish staff/leaders so that new volunteers are invited in.
A S N Leaders at the parish are poor delegators.
A S N Volunteers are needed to help with little tasks, but the staff or main leaders make all the decisions.
A S N When I volunteer I feel like I have made a valuable contribution to the parish community.
A S N I have heard the parish staff/volunteer leaders beg for help.
A S N Potential volunteers are asked to name their personal gifts, interests, and talents to help match them to volunteer jobs.
A S N Volunteers are given the opportunity to learn new things and develop their gifts, talents, and faith through their volunteer ministry.
A S N Volunteers are invited to name their own experience of God and then decide how they want to respond through service at the Church.
Developing a Leadership System

Getting Ready
Breaking the jobs down to size!

Three steps to getting ready:

- List all the tasks necessary to do the event/program.
- Combine these tasks into jobs that are large enough to be meaningful but small enough not to overwhelm.
- Write job descriptions that include:
  - The name of the program and a title for the job
  - Tasks to be performed
  - Abilities needed
  - Length of commitment (number of days, times, how many hours, meetings)
  - Support and supervision
  - Benefits to the person and the community

Pages 11-12 contain forms to assist in the “Getting Ready” steps, page 13 has additional information about possible jobs and tasks, and page 14 has job description examples.
Inviting Leaders

Three levels of Recruitment

- **General Recruitment**—ongoing efforts to create a leadership pool. This includes:
  - New Parishioner Packets—follow-up to ensure that youth ministry is in them and you will get a copy of any packet that indicated interest.
  - Surveys to parents—survey parents whose children are involved in Religious education or Confirmation preparation. Indicate your on-going need for volunteers and your desire for their participation.
  - Invitations to parish organizations—invite yourself to other ministry’s meetings and ask for their assistance in your ministry, either as individuals or as a group/ministry.

- **Specific Recruitment**—ongoing efforts to advertise your need for volunteers. This includes:
  - Want Ads that you place in the bulletin, parish web-site, and newsletters. People should be aware that you have an on-going need for volunteers within your ministry.
  - Handing out job descriptions for specific programs to encourage people to volunteer.

- **Targeted Recruitment**—Personal invitations to individuals to help with specific programs. A plan for targeting individuals includes:
  - Identify criteria for involving leaders. This could include wanting people to be practicing Catholics, have an appreciation for youth, be holy and faithful people, etc.
  - Gather people (outside youth ministry) to brainstorm parishioners who could help with youth ministry. Use parish lists, rosters, ask staff, long-time parishioners, youth, etc. There are many people not known to the youth ministry community of your parish which is why it is important to enlist the help of others in this step.
  - Call them up or visit them to discuss your interest in their involvement. This can happen after mass, on the phone, at the soccer game, or at their home. It is also possible to do a “blitz” for recruitment and send a letter to people inviting them to meeting where you will outline the help needed and the support you will provide. This option will be much less effective, but you should get some response.
  - Explain the leadership positions available and invite the person to consider how they would like to be involved. Be sure that you are gracious with whatever response they give you.
  - Explain your expectations around their involvement, including training provided, forms to be filled out, background check, Safe Environment training, etc.
Orientation
Orientation always includes:

- Guidelines of the youth ministry program (being nice to each other, no pairing off, etc.)
- Specific rule of the event
- Expectations of the adults
- Any information needed (phone numbers, times, places, etc.)
- Information to do their job well (background information, traditions, etc.)

The longer the volunteer commitment, the longer the orientation should be. Catechists often attend a day-long or extended evening of orientation for their year-long commitment. Drivers for bowling, chaperones for the dance, and bakers for youth group need 5 minutes.

Training
Training is vital!

No one is born with all the skills necessary to do youth ministry well. Volunteers will have a variety of learning needs—leadership skills, small group facilitation, speaking in front of a large group, listening, conflict resolution, etc. They may also need theological education, including church teaching, scripture, etc. Volunteers may also need training in areas such as planning prayer services, presiding at prayer, how to share appropriately about personal life and faith journeys, etc.

One of the first tasks for providing training is to figure out what are the learning needs. Sometimes volunteers can receive the training they need by on-the-job training and mentoring (if done intentionally), other times they will need knowledge that comes from a book, video, on-line training, or other individual means, and other times volunteers will benefit from learning as a community, either at the parish, diocese, or within a national program.

Each person who volunteers needs to feel good about their contribution and that won’t happen if they aren’t able to do a good job because they lack the skills, knowledge, or experience to achieve.

Basic training and orientation should involve the particular information that will make their job easier, including things like:

- “This has worked in the past in this situation.”
- “Here are my notes from last year.”
- “Why don’t you try this…”
- “Be careful to…“
- “Make sure you remember…”
- “I would suggest…”

We don’t want to force other people to do things the way that we would do them, but it is possible to share what you know without demanding that the new person does it exactly the same way. Most people would rather learn from the past than to just blindly move forward.
Some options for training include:

- Diocesan Certification Programs
- Diocesan/regional training programs
- Parish-level youth ministry training
- Online training
- Books and articles
- On-the-job training for specific jobs
- Group evaluation and feedback

**Formation**

Formation involves the spiritual and relational aspects of leadership development. It includes such things as:

- faith sharing
- praying together
- community building
- socializing
- sharing stories about our experiences with youth

Parishes that work to create a faithful and caring community of leaders for youth ministry experience the most success. The volunteers enjoy being with the young people, experience affirmation and joy from being with each other, and are conscious of growing in faith and their ministry through reflection, conversation, and prayer.

The focusing question for formation of youth ministry volunteers is: “who and what are we about as people of faith ministering with youth?”

**Support**

Support includes:

- Affirmation and acknowledgement—letting people know that their service is valued and appreciated through personal notes, verbal thank you’s, appreciation dinners, pictures on the bulletin board, etc.
- Supportive assistance—doing things that help a person volunteer, such as paying for training, providing baby-sitting (or welcoming kids at your meetings), attending to personal struggles and tragedies, etc.
- Feedback and evaluation—letting people know what they are doing well and how they can continue to grow in their role. This feedback is best done in an on-going, consistent way with all of the volunteers.
A Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

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Guide us, as we continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.
# Worksheet 1: Leadership Tasks Listing

Program: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Tasks</th>
<th>Leadership Positions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Position: __________________________</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Leadership Tasks: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Indicate numbers from column 1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Worksheet 2: Leadership Role Description

1. **Program**  
   __________________________________________________________
   **Job Title**  
   __________________________________________________________

2. **Leader Tasks to be Performed** (see Leader Tasks worksheet):
   1. _______________________________  4. _____________________________
   2. ________________________________  5. _____________________________
   3. ________________________________  6. _____________________________

3. **Abilities Needed** (skills, attitudes, understandings):
   1. ________________________________  5. _____________________________
   2. ________________________________  6. _____________________________
   3. ________________________________  7. _____________________________
   4. ________________________________  8. _____________________________

4. **Length of Commitment**
   - Length of Service (dates):  __________________________________________
   - Additional Meetings/work: ____________________________________________
   - Orientation/Training: ________________________________________________

5. **Support and Supervision**
   - Who Provides Support: ________________________________________________
   - When and Where (one-on-one, meetings): ______________________________
   - Training and Preparation Offered for this Position (what, how, where, when):
     ________________________________________________________________

6. **Benefits of the position**
   - To the leader: _______________________________________________________
   - To the community: _________________________________________________

Completed by ___________________________       Date _______________
Spaghetti Dinner
The following is some suggested jobs and tasks if a parish was going to host a spaghetti dinner as a fundraiser in the parish. From this list, job descriptions would be created, and recruitment for the following positions would begin.

- Over-all Coordinator – Secure date and place, help with scheduling of all volunteers, oversee each committee’s work, write thank you notes at the completion of dinner.
- Administration – Publicity, bulletin announcements, create tickets
- Donations – Seek donations of food, decorations, and desserts
- Tickets – Sell tickets after masses and at other parish events, collect tickets at the door and serve as greeters
- Food Buyers – Purchase the food and deliver it to the kitchen on day of (or day before) event.
- Kitchen Coordinator – Create the menu, food amounts, and a shopping list for all un-donated foods. Over-see the kitchen during event.
- Host/Hostess – Greet people at the door and seat them
- Cooks – Cook the food and help in the preparation of the salad, bread, and drinks. Put together the food plates and set-up the dessert table prior to the start of the event.
- Servers – Serve the guests at the tables, providing for their food and drink needs.
- Set-up and Decorating – Help to set-up the dinning room and decorate the hall and tables.
- Table Cleaners – Clean tables after guest leave and re-set for next party. Assist with overall clean-up at the end of event.
- Entertainment – Make arrangements for entertainment and help with any set-up, MCing, and other needs of entertainment.
- Clean-up – everyone helps with clean-up at the end of the event.
**Spaghetti Dinner Coordinator**

**Tasks:** Coordinate the Spaghetti dinner, including securing the date and place, coordinating and working with the volunteers to ensure that all jobs are done, over-seeing the event (troubleshooting), and expressing gratitude during and after the event.

**Abilities:** Strong organizational skills, good communication skills, able to multi-task, good at affirmation.

**Length of Commitment:** 2 months, including 3 coordinating meetings (dates), at least 4 hours of checking-in phone calls, and the full day of the event.

**Support and Supervision:** Provided by the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, including last year’s notes and an orientation to the job.

**Benefits:** Ability to help Youth Ministry raise a substantial amount of money to use for programs, personal satisfaction of using skills for parish life.

---

**Spaghetti Dinner Food Buyer**

**Tasks:** Purchase the food for the Spaghetti Dinner seeking the lowest prices available and deliver it to the Hall.

**Abilities:** Own transportation, good shopper, strong back for transporting goods.

**Length of Commitment:** 3-4 hours, needed the day before for shopping and dropping the food off at the hall.

**Support and Supervision:** Provided by the Spaghetti Dinner Coordinator and the shopping list provided by the Kitchen Coordinator

**Benefits:** Ability to help Youth Ministry raise a substantial amount of money to use for programs and the satisfaction of contributing to the program. (Also, you will be sure the food you eat is fresh!)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training program?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

Content of the program
Handout Packet
Presentation
Length of workshop

Anything else?
Creating Gathered Youth Events

This workshop helps parish leaders plan successful youth ministry programs. Workshop participants will learn how to create a focus for the program, put together the needed program element, and plan for success. Additionally, participants will learn how to evaluate resources and program designs.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Opening Prayer

Gather
Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for gathering us here tonight. Be with us, help us, fill us with your Spirit. Amen.

Listen
Blessed be the Lord, source of our inward voice,
in whose grace we listen to ourselves,
in whose wisdom we discover what we have to give,
in whose courage we come to dare,
in whose protection we learn to trust,
in whose giving we learn to yield,
in whose living we learn to die,
in whose dying we learn to live.

All: Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

Respond
Response: Be with us, Lord
- As we learn how to better serve the young people of our parish. Response.
- As we share this time of learning together. Response.
- As we grow as a community committed to serving your young people. Response.

Response: Show us the way, Lord
- Loving God, help us to grow in faith, hope, and joy so we can serve you better. Response.
- Loving God, help us to better see what our young people need. Response.
- Loving God, help us to be people committed to the Gospel message. Response.

Send Forth
Give us your Spirit in our work together Lord—we need your joy, your graciousness, your unconditional love, your forgiveness in our lives. Be with us, we pray, so that we can open our lives more fully to you and all you have revealed to us through your Son Jesus. We ask this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.
Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

The components describe specific areas of the mission of the Church that work together to provide ministry with adolescents. “These components provide a framework for the Catholic community to respond to the needs of young people and to involve young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community”

*Renewing the Vision, p. 26*

**Advocacy**
Interpreting the need of young people, standing up for young people, both as individuals and as a youth community.

**Catechesis**
Deepening the faith of young people through teaching and reflection—working towards transformation.

**Community Life**
Building community, not just between young people, but with their families and engaging youth in the broader parish community.

**Evangelization**
Proclaiming the Good News and inviting youth into relationship with Jesus Christ through ongoing witness.

**Justice and Service**
Engaging young people in helping and serving other people, and understanding the Gospel call to justice through education and reflection.

**Leadership Development**
Inviting, training, and supporting adults and young people into leadership for youth ministry and with the broader parish community.

**Pastoral Care**
Providing prevention programs for youth and families, caring for those in crisis, and providing guidance during times of decisions and moral choices.

**Prayer and Worship**
Helping youth to develop an individual prayer life, experience a variety of communal prayers, and involving youth in the sacramental life of the Church.
Flexible and Adaptable Programming

“The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing ministry programming for adolescents:

- a diversity of program settings
- age-specific programs for young and older adolescents
- family-centered programs for the entire family, for parents, for foster parents, for grandparents raising children, adolescents
- intergenerational parish programs
- community-wide programs
- a balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of comprehensive ministry...
- a variety of approaches to reach all adolescents and their families, including parish, school, and community-wide programs
- small-group programs and small ecclesial community experiences
- home-based programs, activities, and resources
- one-on-one and mentoring programs and activities
- independent or self-directed programs
- a variety of scheduling options and program settings to respond to the reality of the busy lives and commitments of adolescents and their families
- use of current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation” (RTV, p. 25).

- non-gathered strategies (birthday cards, study kits, newsletters, bulletin boards celebrating youth accomplishments, etc.)
Youth Ministry that Works

Bigger is still not better
We always want our program or activity to draw great numbers. This is still the most common trap for leaders in youth ministry. Just because lots of young people come to programs doesn’t mean they are being fed spiritually or having their needs met. And when numbers are small—it just may mean that leaders are doing exactly what they are called to do with those young people in their care.

If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time
An amazing amount of youth ministry happens by inertia. No real plan, no real vision – just a mindset that says, “Here’s a neat resource…it might work…let’s give it a go.” To be most effective, know what you are trying to accomplish through your activities/programs, and make sure that variety is a part of the offerings. Gathering young people just to be together is not enough. Thoughtful youth ministers will submit themselves to a vision statement that stubbornly and consistently guides their program planning. Renewing the Vision is just such a vision statement.

The “everyday” is important
One of the great challenges of youth ministry is to help young people find the holy in their daily life—the moments at home, at basketball practice, at the rehearsal for the play, on the drive or walk to work, or stopping to talk with their friends. The joy of the Gospel is found in the choices we make in every moment. Young people need time and someone to help them stop and remember that practicing their faith isn’t just going to church or attending youth programs. They need help to uncover God in the everyday. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do with a young person is something that appears eminently unspiritual—simply meet young people at their point of need, and try to listen and love them.

One size does not fit all
A common error still practiced in parishes today is trying to meet the needs of all the young people with one program a week. It simply doesn’t work. We tend to program to the lowest common denominator. If you’re working with a group whose commitment levels range from spiritual dynamo to disinterested “forced-to-be-there” troublemaker, you can bet the focus of your efforts will be on the troublemaker. Don’t be afraid to program deeply enough, with enough content, with enough challenge that some young people will balk. Be willing to say, “Maybe this Wednesday night program is a little too heavy for where you are right now. Why don’t you just keep coming on Sunday nights for a while and see what happens?”
**Program Designs – How Well Did We Do?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Focus:</th>
<th>Respect for Those We Serve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Time:</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>A group of 9th graders who know each other. This session will take place just prior to leaving to go serve at a Soup Kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants:</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Icebreaker: Knots**

(10 minutes)
Form groups of 7 and have them stand in a circle. Have everyone put their hands in the circle and take the hand of two different people. It should not be the hand of someone on either side of them. When everyone has connected hands, have them, without letting go of the hands, get out of the knot that they are in. They should be able to form a circle or a figure eight, depending on how hands are connected.

**Prayer: Whatever You Do To the Least of My Brothers**

(5 minutes)
This prayer will focus on the scripture that reminds us that however we treat the “least” is how we are treating Jesus. Following the Scripture, the intercessions will invite the young people to pray for the courage to treat all those they meet as they would treat Jesus.

**Guidelines/Expectations:**

None

**Content:**

(5 minutes)
The unacceptable person (from Gather/Register) should be introduced to the group and “unmasked.” Participants should be asked to comment on the following questions:
- What did you think about the person as you entered the building?
- How did you treat the person?
- Why did you treat him/her that way?

**Refreshments:**

(10 minutes)
Have some snacks for the young people – preferably something that they really enjoy (chips, cookies, etc.)

**Social Time:**

None

**Welcome/Introductions:**

None

**Form Groups/Teams:**

None

**Gather/Register:**

As the young people come into the building, there should be someone outside the building who is “unacceptable.” The person can be dressed as a homeless person, asking for money or help, or they might be a person who appears to be mentally disabled or just someone who is very “un-cool.” This person should not make a spectacle of him/herself, but each person entering the building should end up passing by this person.

**Community Builders/Games:**

None
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Program Focus:</strong></th>
<th>Eating Disorders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Time:</strong></td>
<td>One hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Open to all high school ages youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Participants:</strong></td>
<td>Expected participants – about 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Icebreaker:</strong></th>
<th>Who Is Here (5 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The icebreaker is a simple way of developing a comfort level with the others who are in attendance. The young people are asked to stand if the statement applies to them. Statements can include age, schools, activities, places people have visited, concern for those with eating disorders, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Prayer:</strong></th>
<th>The Body is a Temple (5 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This prayer service will focus on how our body is a gift from God and how we should always respect our body.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Guidelines/Expectations:</strong></th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Content:</strong></th>
<th>(40 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The core content of the program is presented by a guest speaker. The speaker will talk about different eating disorders – what are the warning signs, why they are hard to treat, what are the physical and psychological consequences of eating disorders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The presentation will be followed by a 15 minute discussion in small groups that will focus on the following questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who do you know who suffers from an eating disorder?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why do you think that they started to have a problem with food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why is respecting the body so important for Catholics?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Refreshments:</strong></th>
<th>Refreshments will be offered at the beginning of the program, as people are gathering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social Time:</strong></th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Welcome/Introductions:</strong></th>
<th>(5 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the start of the presentation, the young people will be welcomed, thanked for their attendance, and introduced to the adult leaders of the program and the guest speaker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Form Groups/Teams:** | As people enter they will be given the name of a food (apple, cookie, steak, etc) on a piece of paper. When it is time to break into groups for discussion, they will gather with the others that have the same food. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Announcements:</strong></th>
<th>(5 minutes)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young people will be informed about resources and programs that are available to those who have eating disorders in their community. This will include websites that have additional information. Announcements about upcoming youth ministry activities will also be shared.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Community Builders/Games:</strong></th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Program Focus:** Importance of Community  
**Length of Time:** 1 hour and 15 minutes  
**Audience:** A group of 7th graders who are just beginning a school-year-based religious education class. They don’t know each other well.  
**Number of Participants:** 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icebreaker: Musical Chairs (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Prayer: Where Two or More are Gathered (10 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each person competes with the others to find a chair when the music stops. There is always at least one chair less than the number of people. The winner is the last person in the chair when only two participants are left playing.</td>
<td>This prayer will focus on the Scripture that reminds us that God is present to us in other people and that our combined prayers are important. The core of this prayer is allowing the young people to pray for the concerns of their heart (intercessions). One of the hopes of this prayer service is that the young people will begin to develop a comfort with praying out loud.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidelines/Expectations: (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Content: (30 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Since this is the first session, have the participants brainstorm the “rules” that they would like to live by for the year. Allow them to come up with ideas. Add any ideas that you think will be necessary for the good working of the class. When you have a good list of rules, ask the young people what will happen to them, as a class, if they don’t follow the rules. Ask the class to come up with some simple consequences for those who “break the rules.” This all should be done simply, quickly, and in a light manner, but should also have a note of seriousness about it. | The core content of this program will be a discussion of the Scripture passage from Corinthians – about the interdependence of the parts of the body (“The eye can’t say to the ear, I don’t need you…”) The facilitator should read the Scripture and lead the young people in a discussion using the following questions:  
• How is the Church similar to the Body of Christ?  
• Why are some parts of the body more private than others?  
• How is this Scripture passage similar to or different from your school?  
• What can you do to live out this scripture in your daily life? |

| Refreshments: None | Social Time: None |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcome/Introductions: (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Form Groups/Teams: None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the start of the class, each person should introduce him/herself. This might include where they go to school, how many people are in their family, a favorite sport/activity. Make sure to introduce yourself to the group as well.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Announcements: (5 minutes)</th>
<th>Community Builders/Games: None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young people should be informed about any upcoming youth ministry or parish activities. They should also be told of anything special that they should do prior to the next class, or anything that they need to bring with them.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Youth Ministry Training In-Services provided by the OYYAM in the Diocese of Helena
Program Focus: Relying on God
Length of Time: 2 hours
Audience: A group of 11th graders on an overnight retreat. This session occurs on the second day of the retreat.
Number of Participants: 35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icebreaker: Knots</th>
<th>Prayer:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>(15 minutes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus of the prayer is on the needs of people throughout the world. The Scripture will be the Good Samaritan. The young people will be given a circle (representing the world) and asked to write some prayers for people throughout the world who need help. These circles will be taped to the altar or prayer space wall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidelines/Expectations: (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Content: (60 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a few minutes to outline your expectations about appropriate behaviors for young people on a retreat – things like respecting privacy, openness to new ideas, being considerate of each other, and respecting the rules of the retreat facility.</td>
<td>The core content of the program will involve three different elements: 1. Participants will be lead through a guided meditation. The meditation will lead them through a conversation with Jesus – talking about what is going on in their lives, what they are struggling with, and inviting them to listen to what Jesus wants to tell them. 2. A witness talk will be shared with the young people about how an individual has come to rely on God during the good and bad things that happen to him/her. 3. A group discussion will follow the witness talk, giving the young people an opportunity to share their thoughts about how they struggle to rely on God in their own lives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refreshments: None</th>
<th>Social Time: (15 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The participants should have a break during this session.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcome/Introductions: None</th>
<th>Form Groups/Teams: None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Announcements: None</th>
<th>Community Builders/Games: (20 minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The young people will participate in a trust-building activity. One person will be blindfolded and asked to walk through a floor covered with jacks. The other young people will have to give directions to the blindfolded person to lead them safely through the maze of jacks. A short discussion will follow about trust.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements of a Gathered Youth Program

Step One: Decide on the Program Focus

What is the main point you would like to address during this session? Consider…

- The time of the year – what is happening in their lives?
- The liturgical calendar – what is happening in the Church?
- Programs have you previously done – how can you make a connection to a previous session?
- Your other events – how can you connect this to something else happening during this month/season?
- The components of youth ministry – are there certain components that you rarely do? Is this an opportunity to provide for that component?
- The needs of the group - what do they need right now?
- The learning needs of the group – what don’t they know that they should?
- The expressed needs of the parents – what are parents expecting from youth ministry that hasn’t been done yet?
- Your goals for youth ministry – what goal are you trying to achieve that you could address through this program?
- The development of the young people – what are the ages of the young people who regularly come? How much content can they process and understand?

Once you have named your goal, move on to your planning.

Step Two: Select Program Components

Begin by thinking through the main focus on your program that was decided above. How will you present this content? You may use one or more of these ideas to present your content.

- Presentation – Someone from your team presents information to the young people. This should be no more than 10-15 minutes in length.
- Video – Use a faith-based video, movie, TV show, or other media to present information.
- Guest Speaker/Panel Discussion – Someone (or a group of people) from your parish or community present information to the young people. This should be no more than 10-15 minutes in length.
- Small Group Discussion – The young people will work in teams with information you provide (through presentation, video, handout, etc.) to discuss this information and make a personal connection to it.
- Activity – The whole group together or the group divided into smaller groups does an activity that helps them to learn about or experience the content.
- Large Group Discussion – A facilitator asks questions of the young people within a large-group format. Often these questions are focused on a previous presentation, or help lead into a presentation or activity.
- Faith Witness – Someone from your team presents a faith witness to the young people. This should be no more than 10-15 minutes in length.
Once you have a plan for the content, consider the rest of the program elements that will help you build towards your content and create a well-rounded experience for the young people. Not every program will need all of these components.

- **Gather/Register/Welcome** – How will you welcome people as they arrive? How will you register them?
- **Prayer** – Will the group pray at the beginning of the session, at the end, or many times?
- **Introduction** – How will you introduce the session?
- **Guidelines/Expectations** – Do you need to talk about appropriate behavior or other expectations for the session? How will this be done?
- **Community Building** – How will you make sure that people are comfortable and get a chance to meet new people or connect with people they know?
- **Form Groups** – Will you need to form groups for any activities? How will you get them into those groups? Do you want to be intentional about who is in each group or will random groupings be okay?
- **Social Time/Refreshments** – Do you want to leave time for social time? Will you be serving refreshments? Do you want to incorporate the refreshments into the program design?
- **Announcements** – Are there announcements about upcoming events that need to be made? How much time do you need for that?

*(Please note: There are many resources that you can use in preparing for the content of your program. Be sure to take advantage of resources that can help broaden your group’s understanding of issues. See pages 17-19 of this packet for websites and other resources.)*

**Step Three: Prepare**

The following are eight elements to consider prior to the program/activity actually happening…

- **Schedule/Calendar** – Have you checked the parish or community calendar so that you don’t plan the retreat during homecoming weekend?
- **Publicity** – Will everyone hear about this, or just the people “who always come”?
- **Facility/Location** – Have you booked the space you need, either in the parish or elsewhere? Is the space appropriate to your activity? Do you have the keys to get into the building and the rooms you will need?
- **Budget** – Do you have the money that you need to do this program? Do you need to charge a registration fee?
- **Environment** – Is the space in need of some art work, color, or prayer focus? Is there setup work necessary? Do you want to create a themed look for this session?
- **Materials/Equipment** – Do you have everything you need? Does it all work? Who is responsible for making sure that it is in the right place and ready to go? Do you have enough copies for everyone? Who is providing the refreshments?
- **Transportation** – Do you need to get people to a different location for this program? Do you have the drivers you need or the bus booked? Does everyone know how to get there, and do they all have insurance and a spare tire?
- **Permission/Registration** – If you are taking people off the property, you will need written parental permission. Do you know the diocesan guidelines for permission slips? Is the activity one for which you will need people to register? Deadlines?
Step Four: Conduct the Program

The following are some helpful hints for conducting programs. Choose ones that will help you make your event most successful.

☐ Consider dressing appropriate to the event (i.e., referee shirts and whistles for a game night).

☐ Do your homework, especially if you are dealing with a subject matter about which you are not well-versed. Or, use a good resource that provides this information to you. Or, use your resources and invite an expert from the parish/community.

☐ Follow the program plan as best you can, but be prepared to go with the flow. Pay attention to what’s happening with the group (bored, distracted, etc.) and adjust accordingly.

☐ Share leadership whenever possible. Enable different adults or youth to conduct different sections of the event. This variety is good for participants’ attention as well as developing the skills of your leaders and youth.

☐ Encourage all leaders to be attentive to and interactive with the group. The person who is leading a particular activity cannot always see or hear everything and needs support in responding to the needs of the group or individual participants.

☐ Share personal stories of faith whenever possible and appropriate. It helps young people to see God and faith as something real and accessible and communicates your care for and trust in them.

☐ Stay enthusiastic; have fun!

Step Five: Evaluation

This final step is the evaluation phase – identifying the ways that you want the young people to evaluate their experience. Identify ways that the team will evaluate the program. Here are some suggestions:

☐ Develop a participant evaluation form and ask each person to fill one out at the end of the program. Have someone read these evaluations and report on them.

☐ Use a group discussion format to surface ideas and thoughts about the program. Ask what people liked the best, what was the least helpful. Make sure that someone on your team writes the ideas down.

☐ Keep your ears and eyes open to how the event is being received by the young people in attendance. Use your own observations to make recommendations for the next time.

☐ Take ten minutes after the young people to leave to gather as a team and provide feedback and evaluation to the team members about the program. Invite all to share the strengths and weaknesses of the program design, and comment on the leadership provided from the team.

☐ Make any notes or changes in the written outline of the program so that you will have an accurate record of this event for the next time you want to use it.
Guidelines for Youth Ministry Programming

**Focus on People**
The best program designs always focus on the ability of youth and adults to relate to one another. So when things get crazy or you feel yourself trying to become the architect of the world’s greatest youth ministry event, pause for a moment and take a look at one of the young people that God has so graciously placed in your life and remember why we do what we do.

**Involve Youth**
It is important that young people know that they have a place at the table and their gifts are required for the faith community’s mission to be carried out fully. Young people bring energy, insight, and wisdom, as well as unpredictability to our program designs. Their involvement will lend credibility to your efforts in the eyes of their peers – so essential for the success of your efforts.

**Strive for Balance**
Rarely will more than two young people be on the same “page” at any one time. It is important to remember to balance the things that we do. Try not to have them doing the same things for the whole evening or afternoon. Variety is definitely the spice of life in youth ministry. Leave time for them to recreate with friends as well as time to pray, talk, learn, play, etc.

**Keep it Moving**
Pacing is everything. As you design your program, be sure that you are able to easily flow from one thing to the next. Don’t design pieces in a way that requires teenagers to have to wait for you to get your act together. Remember that different age groups have different attention spans. You will need to pace something for freshmen faster than something for seniors. The difference between designing and running a good program and a great program is very often the pacing.

**Be Prepared**
You need to be prepared on two levels: the program that you planned and the one that you didn’t. First, be sure to familiarize yourself with the material you are presenting and make sure that you have all the necessary materials. Try not to do things at the last minute, as the young people are arriving, because you want to be present to them and not running around getting ready.

The second level of preparedness is for the unexpected. Do you know where all the spare materials are in the church in case you run out of something? Does everyone know the designated check-in point and time and have the emergency phone number when you are at the amusement park? Being prepared for the unexpected leads to the next guideline.
Be Flexible
Being flexible may very well be what saves your sanity. Flexibility is the trait that will give your ministry with youth many possibilities. Things seldom go exactly as they are planned. If we work to keep our focus on the young people and the reason why we are doing what we are doing, then we will develop the ability to see every moment as an opportunity for growth, living, and learning. Be confident that each moment you get to spend with young people is a moment of grace and needs to be celebrated.

K.I.S.M.I.F
(Keep It Simple, Make It Fun)
“Keep it simple” means to stay focused on the objective. Don’t try to load up any particular program with too many objectives. Do the best that you can to communicate the point of the particular program, but remember that growing in faith is a lifelong process. “Make it fun!” Never forget the joy – for you or for the young people. Humor and joy are effective teachers and essential elements in nurturing relationships that keep young people engaged. Of course, you not only have to make it fun, you also need to have fun. It will be good for you personally and good for your ministry. Enjoy yourself!
Youth Ministry Resources

There are two excellent resources for comprehensive youth ministry. Both are a collection of resources that can be used to produce excellent youth ministry programming, as well as adding non-gathered strategies and infusing young people into the parish community.

Youth Ministry Access

This online subscription website provides resources for gathered youth nights, extended events, and non-gathered strategies. Additionally, there are online training programs for youth leaders and adult leaders in youth ministry. The website is updated seasonally (every three months) with new gathered youth nights and additional resources. The subscription fee is $150 a year and gives everyone in parish youth ministry leadership access to the website. **Youth Ministry Access** is a web service of the Center for Ministry Development. Visit [www.youthministryaccess.org](http://www.youthministryaccess.org) for subscription information, or contact Cheryl Tholcke (cheryl@CMDnet.org) for a 30-day trial subscription to the site (one per parish).

**Youth Ministry Access** is available for both Middle School Youth Ministry and High School Youth Ministry.

Total Faith Initiative

This collection of books includes resources for gathered youth nights, extended events, and non-gathered strategies. There are four books dedicated to catechetical sessions, and six books dedicated to the other components of youth ministry. There is also a Coordinator’s Manual to help organize your ministry. These resources include the *Catholic Youth Handbook* (a “textbook” of the faith for youth) and the *Catholic Youth Bible*. The total cost for the books is $335. Visit [www.cmdnet.org](http://www.cmdnet.org) (book store) for ordering information.

**Total Faith** is designed for High School Youth Ministry.
Websites that Support Youth Ministry

These organizations might be helpful as you continue to grow your youth ministry. This list is not intended to be complete. It offers some information on companies and organizations that offer resources and information that are useful to those working in youth ministry.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development – www.usccb.org/cchd/
This department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) focuses on the needs of the poor and disenfranchised in the United States. The site offers many good resources for parishes focusing on justice issues, including a web-media tour of poverty.

Catholic Relief Services – www.catholicrelief.org
CRS is the organization that provides humanitarian aid and social programs to foreign countries. They have excellent (free) resources for helping groups explore justice issues (Food Fast, Operation Rice Bowl). The website also provides good information about other countries and the current situations that exist there.

Center for Ministry Development – www.CMDnet.org
CMD provides programs and resources for Catholic parishes and dioceses. The website has free, downloadable resources, a family calendar, and information on CMD programs and resources.

Cornerstone Media, Inc. – www.cornerstonemedia.org
Cornerstone Media produces both print and audio materials to help parents, teachers, youth ministers, pastors, and others who work with teens. They use the music that young people listen to everyday as a tool to spark dialogue about values and current issues.

Disciples Now – www.disciplesnow.com
This website is dedicated to supporting Catholic youth ministry. They highlight current issues and resources, and have online chats for adults and youth about issues.

Free the Children – www.freethechildren.com
This international organization was started by a young person to respond to the crisis of child labor throughout the world. It has expanded its mission to include helping young people throughout the world.

Girls and Boys Town – www.girlsandboystown.org
Girls and Boys Town is a national organization that helps young people in crisis. The website offers good information about dealing with young people in crisis and offers information to parents and teens.

Group Publishing – www.grouppublishing.com
This Christian publisher has resources that can support your ministry. Use of their Bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings.

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. – www.nfcym.org
The NFCYM is the national membership organization of diocesan youth ministry leaders. The NFCYM website has information about the national conference for youth (NCYC) and adult youth ministers (NCCYM), and often has information about helping youth deal with current situations (e.g., clergy scandal, 9/11).
Oregon Catholic Press – [www.ocp.org](http://www.ocp.org) or [www.spiritandsong.com](http://www.spiritandsong.com)

OCP is a music publisher that has produced a youth and young adult ministry resource called *Spirit & Song*. *Spirit & Song* includes CDs, music books, and other resources to help parishes use “youth-friendly” music in their prayer and liturgy.

St. Anthony Messenger Press – [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org)

St. Anthony Messenger has two wonderful resources for use with youth ministry. *Youth Updates* address issues of interest to young people. *Catholic Updates* address issues of interest to adults. While *Youth Update* is no longer published, many back issues are available for purchase and many issues are available online.

Saint Mary’s Press – [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)

Saint Mary’s Press offers youth ministry resources in the following areas: catechesis, prayer, and current issues (e.g., clergy scandal, 9/11). In addition, they publish books of prayer written by teens.

St. Meinrad – [www.youthprayer.com](http://www.youthprayer.com)

St. Meinrad hosts a summer youth and liturgy program. This website supports that program and offers information and ideas for young people and youth ministry.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

This is the official website of the U.S. Catholic bishops. Information about specific programs for youth (e.g., World Youth Day) can be found in the Department of Family, Laity, Women, and Youth.

Youth Ministry Network – [www.ymnetwork.net](http://www.ymnetwork.net)

This is a great site for finding other sites that can support Youth Ministry.

Youth Specialties – [www.youthspecialties.com](http://www.youthspecialties.com)

This Christian organization has good resources for community building and “game” ideas. Use of their Bible study and religious education materials requires adaptation for Catholic settings.

Youth, Sing, Praise – [www.youthsingpraise.org](http://www.youthsingpraise.org)

This summer program is hosted by the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois. It is for youth involved in music and drama.

Summer Service Learning and Mission Programs

- Young Neighbors in Action – [www.youngneighbors.org](http://www.youngneighbors.org)
- Catholic Heart Workcamp – [www.heartworkcamp.com](http://www.heartworkcamp.com)
- Group Workcamp – [www.grouppublishing.com](http://www.grouppublishing.com)
- YouthWorks Mission – [www.youthworks.com](http://www.youthworks.com)

Youth Ministry Training In-Services provided by the OYYAM in the Diocese of Helena
Prayer for Youth

We offer to you, loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings.

Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they may believe in themselves and know they are needed in this world.

Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
Evaluation Form

What did you find most valuable about this training workshop?

What could have been added or deleted that would have made it more helpful?

What questions do you still have?

Please rate the following: (1 – poor; 5 – excellent)

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Other comments:
Becoming a Youth Friendly Parish

This workshop helps parish leaders imagine together the parish’s ability to minister to young people throughout all of parish life. Participants will discuss ways to include youth throughout parish life and discover ways that they can collaborate more fully to make young people feel welcomed in all ministries. Parish leaders will discover new ways that they can have a positive effect on youth and on the parish’s youth ministry.

Sharing the Vision - A resource of the Center for Ministry Development

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Cheryl Tholcke
(916) 451-1551
cheryl@CMDnet.org
Acknowledgement

Excerpts from *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* Copyright © 1997 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without the permission in writing from the copyright holder.
Opening Prayer

Gathering
Leader: Turn us around O Lord, and bring us back towards you.
Revive our lives, as at the beginning.
And turn us towards each other, Lord, for in isolation, there is not life.
Amen

Listen: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Respond: “Now is the Time for Turning” by Rabbi Jack Riemer

“To everything there is a season, and there is an appointed time for every purpose under heaven.”

Now is the time for turning.

The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red and orange.
The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the South.
The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter.
For leaves, birds, and animals turning comes instinctively.
But for us turning does not come so easily.
It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits.
It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy.
It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful.
It means saying: I am sorry.
It means recognizing that we have the ability to change. These things are hard to do.
But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways.
God, help us to turn -- from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith.
Turn us around, O God, and bring us back toward You.
Revive our lives, as at the beginning.
And turn us toward each other, God, for in isolation there is no life.

(From "Singing the Living Tradition," by Jack Riemer. Copyright © 1993 by the Unitarian Universalist Association.)
Say Together…
Lord, help us turn —
From callousness to sensitivity,
From hostility to love,
From pettiness to purpose,
From envy to contentment,
From carelessness to discipline,
From fear to faith.

Turn us around O Lord, and bring us back towards you. Revive our lives, as at the beginning. And turn us towards each other, Lord, for in isolation, there is not life. Amen

Respond
Leader: May times of happiness teach us the depth of your love.
May times of adversity teach us the reach of your care.
In all times may we bless you, Father, Son, and Spirit, in whom it is our destiny to live, forever and ever. Amen.
Imaging Our Future

Headline:

Article:
The Role of the Parish Community

The parish is where the Church lives. Parishes are communities of faith, of action, and of hope. They are where the Gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth. Parishes are the home of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church. Parishes are the place where God’s people meet Jesus in word and sacrament and come in touch with the source of the Church’s life.

Communities of Salt and Light, p. 1

The parish community has a special role in promoting participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community.

First, parishes “should be a place where (young people) are welcomed, grow in Jesus Christ, and minister side by side with the adults of the community” (A Message to Youth, USCCB, 1994). In parishes, young people should feel a sense of belonging and acceptance as full-fledged members of the community. Young people are more likely to gain a sense of identity in the community if they are regarded as full-fledged members.

Second, parishes “should have programs for (young people) that recognize (their) special talents and role in the life of the Church. (They) bring to the parish community youthfulness, energy, vitality, hopefulness, and vision” (A Message to Youth). In parishes, young people need to have a wide variety of opportunities to use their gifts and to express their faith through meaningful roles. They will develop a spirit of commitment within a community only through actual involvement in the many ways the Church exercises and carries out its mission. Especially crucial is the interaction with those who have made a lifetime commitment to serving the Church as priests, sisters, brothers, and deacons; young people need to know that such service is both rewarding and fulfilling.

Third, if parishes are to be worth of the loyalty and active participation of youth, they will need to become “youth-friendly” communities in which youth have a conspicuous presence in parish life. These are parish communities that value young people—welcoming them into their midst; listening to them; responding to their needs; supporting them with prayer; time, facilities, and money. These are parish communities that see young people as resources—recognizing and empowering their gifts and talents, giving them meaningful roles in leadership and ministry, and encouraging their contributions. These are parish communities that provide young people with opportunities for intergenerational relationships—developing relationships with adults who serve as role models and mentors. In short, “youth friendly” parish communities make a commitment to young people and their growth.

Parish Support for Youth Ministry

The parish’s support of youth ministry makes all the difference. Parishes with effective youth ministry are places where young people feel at home and are included into the parish community. Youth are a part of the parish’s life, including social, service, and liturgical events. Young people are not just recipients of ministry, they are asked to share their faith with the broader parish community, as well as with their peers, and they are included in parish leadership, serving on pastoral councils and other leadership teams. The parish works together to include and involve youth in parish events.

Good youth ministry happens when the parishioners value youth ministry. Parishioners take pride in the young people’s involvement and know that they can play a role in the lives of youth. Parishioners want young people to be a part of parish events and are happy to include them in the overall life of the parish.

Good youth ministry depends on two distinct ways of ministering to youth. First, the peer community is very important and helps achieve many of the goals of youth ministry. However, equally important is the role of the parish community in involving youth in the overall life of the parish and interacting within the intergenerational community. Effective youth ministry depends on a balance between these two dimensions.

Effective youth ministry depends on the support of the pastor. A pastor’s support can mean a variety of things, but they must publicly demonstrate support for both youth and the Coordinator for youth ministry to be most effective. Some pastors enjoy working within youth ministry in an active way, while others support through guidance, leadership, and limited involvement in youth events.

Effective youth ministry flourishes when parish staffs and leaders work together to achieve the goals of youth ministry. These leaders allow young people to move between ministries easily and work together to infuse young people into everything the parish is doing.

(From The National Symposium on Effective Youth Ministry Practices in Catholic Parishes Project, a research project of the Center for Ministry Development and Saint Mary’s Press, in collaboration with the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.)
Assessment Tool:
Integration of Youth within Parish Life

For each statement circle one of these options:

This needs growth – This indicates that this statement does not currently describe your parish and that this area needs to grow.

We try to do this – This indicates that you are making efforts to make this statement true about your parish but there is more work to do.

We do this well – This indicates that this statement describes your parish at this time.

1. Members of our parish know and value youth in our community.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

2. Our parish community understands youth ministry.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

3. Youth are involved throughout parish life.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

4. Youth are involved in leadership and decision making in our parish.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

5. Our parish encourages and affirms youth’s involvements in parish life.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

6. Our parish staff and leadership have a common vision for youth ministry.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

7. Our parish staff and leadership are familiar with our youth ministry efforts.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

8. Our parish staff members collaborate with each other.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well

9. Youth ministry leaders involve the pastor in youth ministry and keep him informed about youth ministry efforts.
   - This needs growth
   - We try to do this
   - We do this well
Reflection questions:
What is surprising to you from this study?

What are the strengths of your parish?

What are the areas for growth?

What could you do (from information above) that would have the biggest impact on young people’s involvement at your parish?
Keys to Success for Involving Young People

Before Young People are Invited In
Before young people are invited into “adult” ministries and organizations, it is important for that group to think about the following questions;

- Is the meeting process and level of work life-giving for the adults who participate? If not, make changes prior to inviting young people into the group.
- Is the group excited about having young people involved in the ministry? If not, what can be done to create enthusiasm?
- Is the group willing to do things differently to accommodate the needs and gifts of young people? If not, the group should probably not invite new members in.

When They Join
When young people join a group of adults remember to:

- Change some of the current ways of doing things to accommodate the needs of youth. Consider the following:
  - Spend more time helping members of the group get to know each other. Young people will often be less familiar with and to the adults in the group. Young people will participant more fully if they have had a chance to get to know the other members.
  - Create group processes and meeting agendas that involve discussion, small group work, and visual aides to help young people participate at the highest level.
  - Provide refreshments and snacks at meetings. Young people are often coming from school without having had dinner. Make sure that there are beverage options beyond coffee.
  - Share information about the way the group or committee operates. Groups often have “group rules” which everyone follows but aren’t written down anywhere. Young people could offend other members of the group by not following these “group rules.”
  - Be clear about how people are to address each other. Will everyone go by first names?
  - During meetings, leaders can ask young people specifically for their feedback to ensure that they have an opportunity to share their ideas.
- Connect the young people with an adult who will mentor them into their role in the group or committee. This person can:
  - introduce the young people to other members.
  - call a day or two before to remind them of meetings and tasks.
  - explain structures or “group rules” during the meetings or after.
  - work side-by-side with the young people on tasks.
  - provide honest feedback to the young people related to their participation. Young people may make a few missteps along the way that can be kindly corrected by this trusted mentor.
  - communicate with parents about how their child is participating, upcoming meetings and responsibilities, and listen to any concerns parents express.
For Success

- To get the best out of the young people involved consider the following:
  - Young people will appreciate receiving affirmation, especially at the beginning of their participation in an adult group.
  - Give youth some responsibility within the group and expect them to be at their best. Young people will live up to expectations most of the time.
  - Recognize that there are gaps in information, experience, and knowledge between adults and young people. Everyone needs help at times filling in these gaps.
  - Don’t be surprised if young people make a few mistakes along the way. They are not adults yet and there is still much to learn. Help the young people learn from their mistakes.
  - Invite two young people to participate instead of just one. One young person can feel lost or isolated.
  - Parents can be great allies. When young people join adult groups, talk with the parents. Share information about the role, group, and the time commitment. Let the parent know who will be mentoring their child.

A few more things to remember:

- Most adults have jobs with regular schedules—young people rarely do. Young people also have changing schedules because of games, practices, rehearsals, etc. Even the most dedicated and mature young person can find themselves unable to fulfill commitments to meeting dates because of other equally important commitments to school, extracurricular activities, and jobs.
- Achievement at school is the top priority for adolescents. It is their “job” at this point in their lives. It may become necessary for a young person to lessen their volunteer commitments to spend more time studying. This decision should be respected and affirmed.
- Young people have a great gift for honesty and seeing the world with fresh eyes. This often means that they are less willing to do something just because “that is the way we have always done it.” Honor young people’s questions and desire to try new things by listening to them and considering their perspective.
A Prayer for Youth

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Bless them with your guiding grace  
as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives.

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(From Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)
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