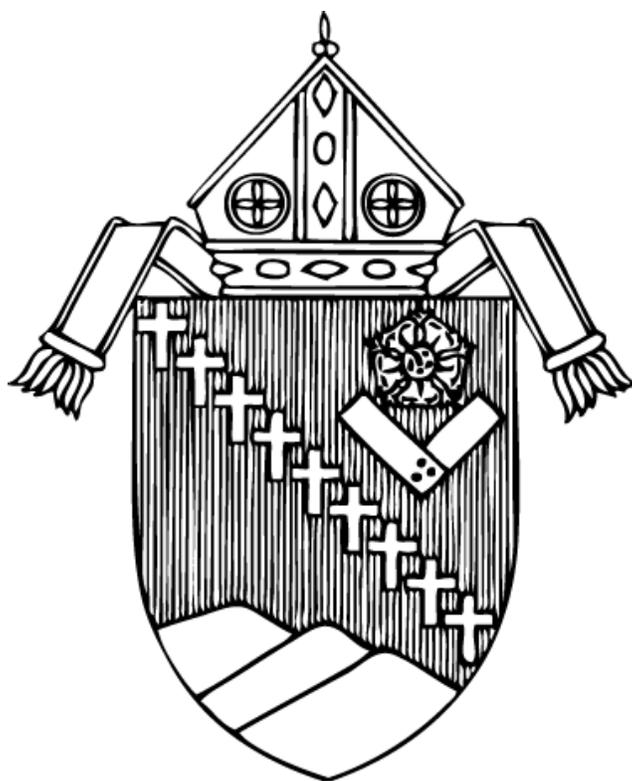


Comprehensive Youth Ministry



An Overview of Renewing the Vision (1997)

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.

Renewing the Vision is a call to make ministry with adolescents a concern for the entire church community.

Three goals of Youth Ministry

1. Empowering young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
2. Drawing young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community
3. Fostering the personal and spiritual growth of each young person

Seven Themes of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

- Developmentally Appropriate
- Family Friendly
- Intergenerational
- Multicultural
- Community-wide Collaboration
- Leadership
- Flexible and Adaptable Programming

Eight Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

- Advocacy
- Catechesis
- Community Life
- Evangelization
- Justice and Service
- Leadership Development
- Pastoral Care
- Prayer and Worship

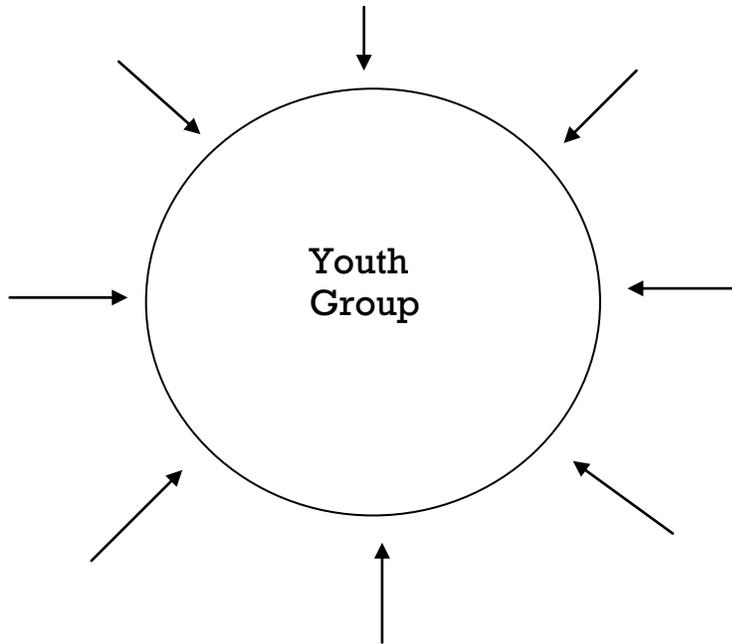
Ministry Settings

- Youth
- Family
- Parish
- Community

Programming Methods

- Gathered: organized assembled programs for youth, families, parish or civic communities
- Non-gathered: small group and individualized approaches that provide flexibility in addressing specific needs

Group Ministry



Group Ministry starts with a group and asks others to join

Assumes:

- That youth needs are similar
- That youth like to join groups
- That youth are available at the same times
- That one or a few adults can meet the needs of the group

Comprehensive Youth Ministry



Comprehensive Youth Ministry begins with a team of adults and youth formed for ministry

Assumes:

- That youth have different needs
- That youth like to choose how to be involved
- That youth have hectic schedules
- That many people doing a little can get a lot accomplished
- That young people benefit by having a variety of adults to relate to

Growing Your Youth Ministry: Ideas Across the Ministry Components

Advocacy

- Develop a youth newsletter, written and formulated 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 a forum of community leaders that reflects on the asset-building strategies developed by the Search Institute.
- 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 a variety of days and times, and an individualized one-on-one study program.
- Invite high school students to be catechists, sharing faith in the childhood 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 pot-luck 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 fund-raisers 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 youth.
- Develop a parish home page on the internet 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 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 the scouting units (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire By and Girls) in your area.
- Sponsor and give scholarships to the young people in your parish to attend leadership development programs.
- Have a special sign-up table at your parish ministry fair with listings of youth leadership positions that match with adolescents' 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 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”.

(From: “Tool 1” in Celebrate Youth. Section Eight, pages 7-11. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1998.)