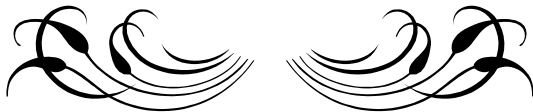


YOUTH MINISTRY: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

More Than Just Fun N' Games

Youth Ministry today is an exciting and emerging ministry within the Catholic Church. In their 1996 document, *Renewing the Vision* (USCC) the U.S. Bishops affirmed the definition of Youth Ministry as “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”.

The needs of young people today extend far beyond the social and athletic dimensions offered through the old CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) programs. Today the church recognizes that young people’s needs are multifaceted and must be ministered to in a variety of ways, through the use of numerous strategies and within a complex of settings. We call this holistic approach to ministering to young people Comprehensive Youth Ministry.



More Than One Way To Reach A Teen

Comprehensive Youth Ministry is a ministry that is **TO, WITH, BY AND FOR** young people.

- **TO:** Adults creating programs to meet the needs of teenagers such as organizing an outreach effort to a homeless shelter or sponsoring an all night lock-in.
- **WITH:** Walking with young people by guiding, forming and empowering youth to be co-ministers with adults in virtually every parish ministry capacity from being a eucharistic minister to serving on Pastoral Council.
- **BY:** Empowering teens to minister to teens such as leading a youth prayer experience or offering a witness talk on a retreat.
- **FOR:** Speaking up on behalf of the young people such as advocating at Pastoral Council that the parish hire a Youth Ministry Coordinator or by asking how the liturgy can be more inclusive of young people.

CYO MODEL

That Was Then...

- Emphasis on athletics and competition within and among parishes.
- Focused on mainly the social dimension of teenagers (dances and sports)
- Adults served as coaches and /or chaperones with oversight offered by a priest.
- CCD (religious instruction) was separated from the CYO with little connection made between the two.
- A sufficient number of priests to supervise programs, but few trained youth professionals.

COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY MODEL

This Is Now...

- Emphasis on community building and cooperation within and among parishes.
- Focuses on the Social, Spiritual, Service and Educational dimensions of young people
- Adults work together as a team led by a trained Youth Ministry Coordinator.
- Affirming, nurturing and challenging young people in their faith is the primary goal of youth ministry.
- Most Youth Ministry Coordinators are professionally certified and full or part time church employees.

They Sure Don't Keep Banker's Hours

Youth Ministry is not a 9-5 job. Youth Ministry Coordinators spend over half of their

time with the young people. The rest of the time is spent in preparation - planning, attending meetings, making phone calls, background reading and professional development.

There are two ways that Youth Ministry Coordinators spend time with young people when they are with them - **Gathered** and **Non-Gathered**.

The **GATHERED** programs are purposeful and intentionally planned youth activities developed and run by the parish youth ministry team. These include retreats, lock-ins, youth group meetings, trips and special events. These gathered programs build a trusting community of young people within the parish that invites them to experience and share their faith in a supportive and caring environment.

phone calls, a personal note, hanging out at the area high school or chatting with someone at the mall. Through these non-gathered strategies, the Youth Minister is able to meet the teens on their "turf" and in a non-threatening way so that a relationship and presence is built between the Church and the young person's life.

How Youth Friendly Are You?

Since youth ministry is such a new ministry in the church, the best nourishment it can receive is through the welcoming support of the adults and staff of the parish community. This support is shown in a variety of ways - from the volunteer support offered by the parents and other interested adults to the financial support granted through the parish's leadership.

The **NON-GATHERED** opportunities are those times when the Youth Ministry Coordinator reaches out to teens through

To Evaluate How "Youth Friendly" Your Parish Community Is, Consider These Top Ten Questions...

Yes No

- Are the young people, or at least their needs, being adequately represented at staff, pastoral and finance council meetings?
- Do the Youth Ministry Coordinator and the Religious Educator work together to create a faith formation program for the young people of the parish?
- Is the youth ministry program expected to fund raise more for its program expenses than other ministries in the parish?
- Are parents of teenagers being ministered to as well as the teens themselves?
- Do the liturgies speak to the youth as well as invite them to fully participate as lectors, eucharistic ministers, musicians and ushers?
- Is professional training and continuing education made available to the Youth Ministry Coordinator as well as the volunteers who minister to the youth?
- Are young people actively encouraged to become involved in leadership and ministry positions at all levels of the parish?
- Are the youth ministry efforts at the parish being promoted, affirmed and spoken about in a positive and affirming manner?
- If the Youth Ministry Coordinator is a paid position, is he/she being offered an equitable and just wage for the number of hours worked?
- Are youth excited about the parish and present at many of the activities?

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