

Comprehensive Youth Ministry Presentation

Outline

1. Welcome and Prayer
 - If the group is small, have everyone introduce him or herself and share from what parish or school they belong.
 - Lead the group in prayer using the one provided, or one of your own choosing.
2. Description of Catholic youth ministry as detailed in *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry (RTV)*.
 - Goals
 - Components
3. Group Reflection
 - Which of these five hallmarks of Catholic youth ministry were/are present in my adolescence?
 - Which were/are missing?
 - Which of these components is a strength of our faith community?
 - Which is a weakness of our faith community?

Audience

While this short outline is developed to educate adult volunteers about comprehensive ministry with adolescents within a Catholic framework, it may also be used for youth leadership training.

Materials Needed

- Copy of Comprehensive Youth Ministry Training Outline (PDF)
- Prayer materials (prayer service, candle/matches, Bible, cross, CD player/CD for singing, etc.)
- Copies of *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (one per person—optional)

Background

“What is needed today is a church which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body, which is the church, to propose the possibility of a choice, which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the church must become the traveling companion of young people...” (Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995, Philippines)

The church must become the traveling companion of young people—and that is what we mean by youth ministry. If, indeed, “it takes an entire village to raise a child,” then it certainly takes an entire church to journey with young people as they grapple with the Good News and respond in discipleship.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their 1997 document, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, identified three goals and eight components which provide direction for this ministry. Youth ministry, at its best, is characterized by the following five hallmarks:

- Discipleship
- Connection
- Giftedness and growth
- Comprehensiveness
- Entire church (parish) involvement

Goals

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their 1997 document, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, have identified three goals which provide direction for this ministry.

Goal 1

Youth Ministry ... it's about discipleship

The first goal of youth ministry is “to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.” (RTV 9). Young people are “searching for a noble adventure”, a compelling and challenging vision of life, and a cause worth their commitment. They hunger to hear the Good News that finds response in discipleship. As their companions on this spiritual journey, some of the ways the Church fulfills this first goal of youth ministry is by ...

- Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus through witness and word to young people.
- Enabling young people to live as disciples through their involvement in service, ministry, and leadership opportunities.
- Providing young people the faith skills for discipleship.

Goal 2

Youth Ministry ... it's about connection

The second goal is “to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.” (RTV 11). Young people have a hunger for connection, to be in relationship, and to belong. Family, peers, school, youth serving organizations, and church are primary connections for young people. Some of the ways the church fulfills this second goal of youth ministry is by ...

- Being a ‘youth friendly’ community that welcomes young people, values their participation, and calls forth their gifts.
- Integrating young people into the liturgical, pastoral, and ministerial life of the parish community.
- Creating opportunities for young people to enter into healthy relationships of trust and respect with their peers and with adults.
- Promoting Catholic identity and religious literacy through programs of adolescent catechesis.

Goal 3

Youth Ministry ... it's about gifts and growth

The third goal of youth ministry is “to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.” (RTV 15). Adolescence is an important time for mental, spiritual, social, and physical growth. Their experiences and relationships greatly influence their healthy and positive development. The Church strives to surround young people with the best possible external scaffolds—networks of caring relationships of family, school, peers, and other adults—while young people are developing their internal psychological and spiritual backbone—their values, life skills, commitments, and moral compass. The Church fulfills this third goal of youth ministry by ...

- Enabling young people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Actively supporting positive youth development and fostering healthy values and life skills.
- Supporting families of young people by providing resources, programs, and services.
- Providing opportunities to experience and express caring, service, and compassion for others.

Components of Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry ... happens comprehensively

Youth ministry is more than programs and events. It 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.” (*A Vision of Youth Ministry*, p. 6, quoted in RTV 1). To be most effective, this is a ministry to, with, by, and for young people that involves their families, their parish community, and the larger community. At the heart of ministry with young people is the presence of caring, supportive relationships where youth experience the Good News in the flesh.

A comprehensive approach to youth ministry utilizes the eight components identified in *Renewing the Vision* as a framework: advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, and prayer and worship. These components guide our efforts in proclaiming the Good News, connecting young people with the faith community, and calling our young people to the challenge of discipleship.

- “The Ministry of Advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community” and within society. (RTV, p. 27) The ministry of advocacy includes protecting the sanctity of human life, speaking with and on behalf of young people, empowering the voice of young people, and developing partnerships in building a healthy community.
- “The Ministry of Catechesis most effectively promotes the faith development of young and older adolescents when the curriculum is focused on important faith themes of the Church and on the developmental needs and life experiences of adolescents.” (RTV, p. 30) It helps young people enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and the sacred

tradition. It provides a healthy future by encouraging youth to live faithfully in providing real life applications so that they may grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

- “The Ministry of Community Life builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures Catholic faith.” (RTV, p. 34) This included relationships between youth and caring adults, but not exclusively.
- “The Ministry of Evangelization shares the good news of the reign of God and invites young people to hear about the Word Made Flesh.” (RTV, p. 36) Drawing from Jesus’ example, evangelization involves the community’s pronouncements and living witnesses of adults and young people that the reign of God is realized in and through Jesus. The ministry of evangelization incorporates several essential elements: witness, outreach, proclamation, invitation, conversion, and discipleship.
- “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 into all ministry efforts.” (RTV, p. 38)
- “The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities.” (RTV, p. 40)
- “The Ministry of Pastoral Care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care for people, especially those who were hurting and in need.” (RTV, p. 42) It involves promoting positive adolescent and family development through a variety of positive adolescent and family development through a variety of positive (preventive) strategies, caring for adolescents and families in crisis through supports, counseling, and referral to appropriate community agencies; providing guidance as young people face life decisions and make moral choices, and challenging systems that are obstacles to positive development.
- “The Ministry of Prayer and Worship celebrates and deepens young people’s relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the Spirit at work in their lives, it incorporates young people more fully in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people, and it fosters family rituals and prayer.” (RTV, p. 44)

Youth Ministry ... it takes an entire Church

“This is what is needed: a Church for young people, which will know how to speak to their heart and enkindle, comfort, and inspire enthusiasm in it with the joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist; a Church which will know how to invite and welcome the person who seeks a purpose for which to commit his whole existence; a Church which is not afraid to require much, after having given much; which does not fear asking from young people the effort of a noble and authentic adventure, such as that of the following of the Gospel.”

(Pope John Paul II. 1995 World Day of Prayer for Vocations)

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