

## COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY

### YOUTH MINISTRY GOALS AND COMPONENTS

Addressing the challenge of the Catholic community to develop effective youth ministry, 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: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* states:

“Three interdependent and equally important goals guide the Church’s ministry with adolescents... They express the Church’s focus for ministry with adolescents, while encouraging local creativity in developing the programs, activities, and strategies to reach these goals” (*RTV*, p.9).

- A. Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- B. Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- C. Goal 3: To foster the total personal spiritual growth of each young person.

The focus of a comprehensive youth ministry program should be the attainment of the above goals as implemented by the following components of youth ministry, which parallel the ministries of the Church:

#### The Ministry of Advocacy

“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... We call upon all ministry leaders and faith communities to use the resources of our faith community ...and the opportunities of this democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and right of adolescents and their families” (*RTV*, p. 27).

#### The Ministry of Catechesis

“The heart of catechesis is the explicit proposal of Christ to the young man in the Gospel (*Mt 19:16-22*); it is a direct proposal to all young people in terms appropriate to young people, and with considered understanding of their problems” (*GDC*, #183). “Genuine faith is a total response of the whole person-mind, heart and will. The ministry of catechesis fosters growth in Catholic faith in all three dimensions- trusting (heart), knowing and believing (mind), and doing (will)” (*RTV*, p. 29).

## The Ministry of Community Life

To teach compassion, generosity, tolerance, peace, forgiveness, acceptance, and love as gospel values and to identify ourselves as Christians requires us to live these values in our interactions with young people and in our community life...The ministry of community life is not only *what* we do (activity), but *who* we are (identity) and *how* we interact (relationships)” (RTV, p. 34).

## The Ministry of Evangelization

“First of all, evangelization is the *initial* effort by the faith community as a whole to proclaim through word and witness the Good News of the Gospel to those who have not yet heard or seen it, and then to invite those persons into a relationship with Jesus Christ and the community of believers. Second, evangelization is the *ongoing* witness of the faith community as it attempts to live out the Gospel with such authenticity that the faith of all the members is sustained and nourished” (*Witnesses and Storytellers*, p. 3). “The starting point for youth evangelization is our recognition of the presence of God already in young people to uncover and name the experience of a God already active and present in their lives” (*Witnesses and Storytellers*, p. 7).

## The Ministry of Justice and Service

“...because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ...”(Lk 4:18)  
 “We need to ...ensure that every Catholic understands how the Gospel and church teaching call us to choose life, to serve the least among us, to hunger and thirst for justice, and to be peacemakers” (*Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, p. 3).

## The Ministry of Leadership Development

“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 for comprehensive ministry with adolescents...Leaders must be trained and encouraged...(and)...involve(s) a wide diversity of adult *and* youth leaders in a variety of roles” (RTV, p. 40).

## The Ministry of Pastoral Care

“The ministry of pastoral care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care of people...The ministry of Pastoral Care involves promoting positive adolescent and family development through a variety of positive (preventive) strategies; caring for adolescents and families in crisis through support, 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 (advocacy)” (RTV, p. 42).

## The Ministry of Prayer and Worship

“The liturgy is the summit to which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all the Church’s power flows” (*Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, #10*). The ministry of prayer and worship “...is to encourage and support youth involvement in the Christian lifestyle, in the liturgical ministries, and in the assembly. Such involvement is young peoples’ *right and duty by reason of their baptism*” (*From Age to Age, #11*).

## THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY AND THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECOMMEND:

- A. Parishes develop a comprehensive youth ministry integrating the goals and components of Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry and reflecting the cultural, social, and economic demographics of the local community.
- B. Ministry with adolescents reflects a spirit of Christian welcome, acceptance in all areas and ministries of parish life, and incorporates the following themes: developmental appropriateness, family friendly, intergenerational, multicultural, community-wide collaboration, flexible and adaptable programming.
- C. Youth have the opportunity to participate in all ministries of the local parish including the development and planning of the parish youth ministry; and in inter-parish, deanery, diocesan, and national activities.
- D. Comprehensive youth ministry utilizes a variety of models, formats, schedules, and environments based on the needs and interests of young people and their families.
- E. Parishes utilize the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and the Office of Religious Education for assistance in leadership training, selection of resources, and program development.

## GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

### PARISH ADMINISTRATION

- Use standardized parent authorization and medical release forms.
- Insure that chaperones are at least 21 years old, and at a ratio of 1 adult to 10 youths for parish activities and 1 adult to 6 youths for overnights and trips.
- Require that an insured adult driver provide transportation for youth.
- Implement the Diocese of Youngstown Child Protection Policy.
  - Provide regular in-service on the policy.
  - Maintain required records.
- Maintain permanent records for youth participants and adult leaders.
- Maintain financial records and prepare annual budget.

- Design and develop youth ministry with:
  - Short and long-range planning over a 12-month calendar that provides regular youth ministry opportunities.
  - 30% of all youth ministry programs and activities to include a catechetical dimension.
  - Comprehensive and substantive catechesis.
  - The learning objectives of the *Curriculum for Catechesis* (grades 9-12) integrated into all aspects of youth ministry.
  - Approved texts and other resources.
  - A variety of learning methods and activities.
  - A variety of programs, i.e. parish, home, small group, large group, etc.
- Provide regular evaluation and update of youth ministry.
  - Include parish staff, adult leaders, parents and youth in the evaluation process.

## PARISH SUPPORT

- Designate an adult coordinator with appropriate training and certification.
- Recruit a team of adults and young people to assist the coordinator.
  - Provide appropriate training for professional staff and volunteers through diocesan and other approved programs.
  - Provide opportunities for peer ministry training and leadership development for youth.
- Incorporate a family perspective in all youth ministry policies, programs and activities.
  - Communicate with and invite parents to participate in youth ministry programs and activities.
  - Support families in sharing, celebrating and living their faith at home and in the world.
- Advocate for youth and families in parish planning and decision-making.
- Provide meaningful and relevant communal prayer and liturgical experiences that promote authentic participation of youth.
  - Incorporate a variety of music and prayer styles.
  - Recruit youth to serve as liturgical ministers such as greeter, cantor, musician, lector, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, etc.
  - Provide opportunities for spiritual growth through days of reflection, retreats, creative prayer, etc.
- Allocate adequate funds to maintain comprehensive youth ministry, including:
  - Training of adult leaders.
  - Catechist formation and certification.
  - Print and non-print media resources, internet access and equipment.
  - Textbooks and supplemental catechetical resources.
  - Facilities suitable for youth ministry activities.
  - Diocese of Youngstown Child Protection Policy implementation.

## DIOCESAN OFFICES OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUPPORT

- Provide regular support and networking opportunities for coordinators and teams.
- Provide training opportunities for professional and volunteer staff.
- Consult with parishes and schools in developing, updating, and evaluating comprehensive youth ministry and adolescent catechesis.
- Recommend appropriate resources, speakers, retreat directors, etc.

## DIOCESAN OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY SUPPORT

- Provide opportunities for diocesan youth gatherings and encourage participation in state, national, and international youth gatherings.