

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS / COMPONENTS

Faith Formation

Faith formation with adolescents most often begins with real life issues and connects faith to life.

Faith formation is at the heart of youth ministry. To be effective and engaging with youth, faith formation has these qualities

- Facilitated by open-minded, authentic, faith-filled adults
- Engages youth's energies
- Includes community building
- Includes peer sharing, witness and leadership
- Teaches about Catholic identity
- Seizes teachable moments
- Is experiential, active and innovative
- Doesn't feel like school – doesn't lecture or have too much focus on textbooks.

Service

The experience of service helps youth grow in faith. These experiences:

- Change their perspective
- Broaden their awareness
- Create empathy
- Help youth feel valuable
- Make faith real – hands on and “spirit” on
- Form community.

An effective method of for engaging youth in service is theological reflection – connecting acts of service to beliefs, Catholic social teachings and everyday life.

Liturgy

Youth have a different way of expressing faith within worship – it is more sensual. Youth's expression in worship needs to be incorporated into the parish's celebration of liturgy. Music and good homilies are important for youth to engage in liturgy.

The involvement of youth in liturgical ministries brings tremendous value to the parish community – providing energy, skill and powerful presence. For the young people it builds faith, confidence and helps them develop gifts.

Extended Trips

Trips, camps, national conferences and world youth day are important because they:

- Help youth feel pride and enthusiasm in being Catholic
- Build community among youth
- Build community between youth and adults
- Create opportunities for leadership
- Amaze young people by connecting them with multitudes of other young Catholics.

Retreats

Youth retreats have a unique ability to touch the hearts of young people, build communities of faith, help youth to grow closer to God and draw youth back into active involvement in parish life. Retreats change the lives of young people.

- Youth mentioned the life changing impact.
- Adult leaders frequently mentioned some aspect of peer ministry/leadership.
- Parish staff talked about seeing the changes in youth.

LEADERSHIP FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Coordinators of youth ministry lead from mission, values, reflection on the components and an understanding of comprehensive youth ministry.

- They know that youth ministry is the responsibility of the whole parish.
- They come in a variety of ages and personalities.
- They act from a sense of vocation; they are aware that they are called to this ministry.

Coordinators of youth ministry have personal attributes and virtues that make them successful

- Healthy, well-balanced
- Dedicated
- Good communication skills
- Approachable
- Trustworthy
- Team player within parish
- Enthusiastic

Coordinators of youth ministry animate dynamic ministry with youth in a variety of ways.

- They are especially valued because they invite, welcome and make youth and adults feel comfortable.
- They advocate for young people's place in the church and make it possible for programs to grow.
- They network with other youth ministers and connect to other parishes and the diocese.

Adult Volunteers

Adults who work with youth must be

- Genuine/real
- Have a passion for youth
- Faithful
- Active in building relationships based in faith
- Present to youth where they are.

Training and formation is very important for adults working in youth ministry. They need to grow in their faith and learn skills for ministry. It is important that we match people to the right jobs.

IMPACT OF YOUTH MINISTRY

From the conversations with youth:

Youth ministry helps young people develop confidence, character, and the ability to share their faith in the world.

From the conversations with adult youth ministry leaders:

Effective youth ministry challenges young people to take risks, develop talents, learn about faith and morals and become better people.

From the conversations with parish staff:

Youth ministry has a transforming effect on youth. Through youth ministry, young people:

- Grow as people and as leaders
- Grow in faith
- Develop values and a moral compass
- Become change agents
- Develop skills to face life's challenges
- Continue parish involvement as college students and young adults.

Youth ministry also has a tremendous impact on the parish community. Youth's involvement is energizing and is a source of pride for the community.

- Youth Ministry empowers youth as witnesses of faith.
- It helps youth become active and develop as leaders for the parish
- It involves youth in liturgical ministry roles that provide a powerful presence and energy to the community.