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### **YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS**

#### **YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS**

In this manual, the term “youth ministry” pertains to the parish’s pastoral and catechetical ministry with adolescents of high school age. Additional programs included within the term “youth ministry” are:

- Interparochial youth ministry events or gatherings
- Pastoral and catechetical ministry with adolescents in Middle School or Junior High School (if separate from the Parish School of Religion)
- Programs preparing youth for the Sacrament of Confirmation (if separate from the Parish School of Religion and/or other parish programs addressing sacrament preparation or Christian initiation)
- Parish-based Recreation Programs (all levels and activities)
- Catholic Chartered Units of the Boy Scouts of America (all levels)
- Youth-Serving Organizations (Girl Scouts of the USA, Catholic Youth Summer Camp, Inc. [CYSC], etc.) using parish, school, or diocesan facilities (all levels)



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**THEMES OF A COMPREHENSIVE VISION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY** (From *Renewing the Vision*)

**Developmentally Appropriate**

Human development and growth in faith is a lifelong journey. Renewing the Vision builds upon the growth nurtured in childhood and provides a foundation for continuing growth in young adulthood. Effective ministry with adolescents provides developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique developmental and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families. This approach responds to adolescents' unique needs, focuses ministry efforts, and establishes realistic expectations for growth during adolescence.

**Family Friendly**

Ministry with adolescents recognizes that the family has the primary responsibility for the faith formation of young people and that the parish and Catholic school share in it. The home is a primary context for sharing, celebrating, and living the Catholic faith, and we are partners with parents in developing the faith life of their adolescent children. The Church can contribute significantly toward strong, life-shaping families for young people. The changes in family life, such as the increasing diversity in family structure, the pressures of family time and commitments, and the changing economic situation, challenge us to respond to family needs and to develop a variety of approaches, programs, activities, and strategies to reach out to families.

**Intergenerational**

Ministry with adolescents recognizes the importance of the intergenerational faith community in sharing faith and promoting healthy growth in adolescents. Meaningful involvement in parish life and the development of intergenerational relationships provide young people with rich resources to learn the story of the Catholic faith experientially and to develop a sense of belonging to the Church. Ministry with adolescents can incorporate young people into the intergenerational opportunities already available in the parish community, identify and develop leadership opportunities in the parish for young people, and create intergenerational support networks and mentoring relationships. Age-specific programs can be transformed into intergenerational programming and new intergenerational programs that incorporate young people can be developed.



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#### **Multicultural**

Adolescents today are growing up in a culturally diverse society. The perceived image of the United States has shifted from a melting pot to a multihued tapestry. The strength and beauty of the tapestry lie in the diverse colors and textures of its component threads—the values and traditions claimed by the different racial and ethnic groups that constitute the people of the United States. Ministry with adolescents is multicultural when it focuses on a specialized ministry to youth of particular racial and ethnic cultures and promotes multicultural awareness among all youth. First, ministry with adolescents recognizes, values, and responds to the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and experiences that exist among adolescents and develops culturally responsive and inclusive programming to address these needs. Second, all ministry with adolescents needs to incorporate ethnic traditions, values, and rituals into ministerial programming; teach about the variety of ethnic cultures in the Catholic Church; provide opportunities for crosscultural experiences; and foster acceptance and respect for cultural diversity.

#### **Community-wide Collaboration**

The Church's concern for the civic community includes advocacy on behalf of young people when public issues that affect their lives need to be addressed. Ministry with adolescents involves creating healthier civic communities for all young people. This involves networking with leaders in congregations of diverse faith traditions, public schools, youth-serving agencies, and community organizations to nurture a shared commitment to promoting healthy adolescent development and a healthy community; to develop mutual respect and understanding; to share resources; and to plan community-wide efforts and programs. Building these relationships can open doors for sharing resources and co-sponsoring training, programs, and advocacy efforts.

#### **Leadership**

Ministry with adolescents mobilizes all of the resources of the faith community in a comprehensive and integrated approach: Part of the vision of youth ministry is to present to youth the richness of the person of Christ, which perhaps exceeds the ability of one person to capture, but which might be effected by the collective ministry of the many persons who make up the Church. This approach involves a wide diversity of adult and youth leaders in a variety of roles necessary for comprehensive ministry. Ministry coordinators have a central role in facilitating the people, programming, and resources of the faith community on behalf of a comprehensive ministry effort with adolescents. Coordination is stewardship—overseeing the resources of the community so that they are used wisely in ministry with adolescents.



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#### **Flexible and Adaptable Programming**

Ministry with adolescents creates flexible and adaptable program structures that address the changing needs and life situations of today's young people and their families within a particular community. The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing ministry programming for adolescents:

- a diversity of program settings
- age-specific programs for young and older adolescents
- family-centered programs for the entire family, for parents, for foster parents, for grandparents raising children, adolescents
- intergenerational parish programs
- community-wide programs
- a balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of comprehensive ministry
- a variety of approaches to reach all adolescents and their families, including parish, school, and community-wide programs
- small-group programs and small ecclesial community experiences
- mentoring programs and activities, independent or self-directed programs
- a variety of scheduling options and program settings to respond to the reality of the busy lives and commitments of adolescents and their families
- use of current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation.



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#### **COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY**

Renewing the Vision also identifies eight components of youth ministry, each of which is an expression of the ministry of the Christian community to young people. In a program of total youth ministry, parishes combine these components.

- Advocacy – enables young people by giving them a voice and calling them to responsibility and accountability around issues that affect them and their future.
- Catechesis – integrates knowledge of the Catholic faith with the development of practical skills for living the Catholic faith in today's world.
- Community Life – provides avenues for adolescents to participate as members of the faith community and opportunities for the faith community to acknowledge, celebrate and value its adolescent members.
- Evangelization – calls young people to be evangelizers of other young people, their families and the community.
- Justice and Service – involves adolescents, their families and parish communities in actions of direct service to those in need and in efforts to address the causes of injustice and inequity and nurtures a lifelong commitment to service and justice involvement.
- Leadership Development – utilizes adult and adolescent leaders in the variety of leadership roles necessary for comprehensive ministry.
- Pastoral Care – promotes positive adolescent and family development, provides care and guidance, challenges systems that are obstacles to positive development, and maintains a contact/referral list to connect youth and their families to support services as needed.
- Prayer and Worship – celebrates and deepens young people's relationship with Jesus Christ through communal prayer and liturgical experiences.



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#### **SERVICE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH**

Our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the urging of his spirit, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church.

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; enables 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.

In keeping with the commitment of Catholic youth ministry to educate youth for Christian service, each youth ministry program should provide opportunities for youth to participate in service activities and service programs of the diocese, their parishes, and local community organizations.



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#### **ACCESSIBILITY OF COUNSELING REGARDING CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION**

Youth ministry programs should provide their students with access to counseling regarding the Catholic tradition of conscientious objection as noted in the 1983 pastoral *The Challenge of Peace* and to make known to youth the availability of this counseling.



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#### **SYSTEMATIC CATECHESIS**

“[Catechesis] must be systematic, not improvised but programmed to reach a precise goal.” (John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979, 21.) To facilitate a systematic catechesis, adolescent catechesis in all programs, must compliment and follow the diocesan *Religion Graded Course of Study* and reflect the scope and sequence set forth in the *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*.



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**THE MINISTRY OF CATECHESIS (Adapted from *Renewing the Vision*)**

"Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the church's efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 4).

The ministry of catechesis helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community and increase their knowledge of the core content of the Catholic faith. The ministry of catechesis also helps young people enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and the sacred tradition and their application to life today, and live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives, especially through a life of prayer, justice and loving service. 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). The goal should be to have all Catholic youth involved in some program of catechesis.

The ministry of catechesis with adolescents has several distinct features that give direction to catechetical programming. Specifically, catechesis with adolescents:

- Recognizes that faith development is lifelong and therefore provides developmentally appropriate content and processes around key themes of the Catholic faith that are responsive to the age-appropriate needs, interests and concerns of young and older adolescents.
- Teaches the core content of the Catholic faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church - the profession of faith, celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ and Christian prayer - in order to provide a solid foundation for continued growth in faith.
- Integrates knowledge of the Catholic faith with the development of practical skills for living the Catholic faith in today's world.
- Utilizes the life experience of adolescents, fostering a shared dialogue between the life of the adolescent - with its joys, struggles, questions, concerns and hopes - and the wisdom of the Catholic faith.



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- Engages adolescents in the learning process by incorporating a variety of learning methods and activities through which adolescents can explore and learn important religious concepts of the Scriptures and Catholic faith. A variety of learning approaches keeps interest alive among adolescents and responds to their different learning styles.
- Involves group participation in an environment that is characterized by warmth, trust, acceptance and care, so that young people can hear and respond to God's call. This fosters the freedom to search and question, to express one's own point of view and to respond in faith to that call.
- Provides for real-life application of learning by helping adolescents apply their learning to living more faithfully as Catholic adolescents - considering the next steps that they will take and the obstacles that they will face.
- Promotes family faith development through parish and school programs by providing parent-education programs and resources, by incorporating a family perspective in catechetical programming and by providing parent-adolescent and intergenerational catechetical programming.
- Recognizes and celebrates multicultural diversity by including stories, songs, dances, feasts, values, rituals, saints and heroes from the rich heritage of various cultures.
- Incorporates a variety of program approaches, including parish and school programs, small-group programs, activities, mentoring programs, and independent or self-directed programs or activities.
- Explicitly invites young people to explore the possibility of a personal call to ministry and the beauty of the total gift of self for the sake of the kingdom.

The ministry of catechesis most effectively promotes the faith development of young and older adolescents when the curriculum is focused on important faith themes drawn from the teachings of the church and on the developmental needs and life experiences of adolescents.



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#### **SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS FOR CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS**

It is the responsibility of the diocese to recommend catechetical curricula and textbooks (*National Directory for Catechesis* #59). The Office for Religious Education and Catechesis determines and publishes a list of approved religion textbooks in accordance with the diocesan *Religion Graded Course of Study* that reflect the scope and sequence set forth in the *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*.

While textbooks are not required for the catechetical component of a comprehensive youth ministry, any textbooks used as a primary resource must be on the approved list.



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#### **CURRICULUM: HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Formal instruction in the different aspects of human growth and development is included in the *Religion Graded Courses of Study*. In alignment with the Diocesan philosophy for youth ministry, instruction must be grounded in Catholic theology and follow the guidelines set forth in *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living: Guidelines for Curriculum Design and Publication*.

It is recommended that communication to and involvement of parents be an integral part of this curriculum.



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**YOUTH AND THE SUNDAY MASS**

(Adapted from *Youth and Sunday Mass: Preparing Youth for Liturgy and Preparing the Liturgy Well*, Archdiocese of Cincinnati.)

“Liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself, which is ‘the sacrament of unity,’ namely, a holy people assembled and ordered under the bishops...” (CIC cann. 837 §1)

The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is an act of Christ and his Body, the Church. Anything that would divide the Body of Christ is contradictory to the Eucharist. A separate Sunday youth Mass deprives the parish community of the gifts of young people and deprives young people of inclusion in the broader, intergenerational, community of faith.

Special liturgies for youth run counter to what we believe about the Eucharist, the Church does not ordinarily provide special Masses on Sunday for any particular age or interest group,

All liturgies should welcome young people, as all people. If "youth-friendly" means appropriate music, a relevant homily understandable to all ages, and including young people in liturgical roles, then all will benefit.

However, if "youth-friendly" is taken to mean liturgies where the liturgical roles, music and homily are principally, or even exclusively, directed toward youth, the inclusive nature of the liturgy is lost.

Two very influential elements of the liturgy for youth are preaching and music. These two elements are in need of particular attention if we hope to provide an experience of worship that is meaningful for youth, as they exist within the Body of Christ.

It should be remembered that the youth are not the future of the Church. They are just as much the present as other generations are and should be welcomed as such.



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#### **STRATEGIES FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUTH**

- Be well formed in the liturgy and integrate its richness into your ministry.
- Attend workshops, study the liturgy, and deepen both your understanding and appreciation of it.
- Regularly include in your ministry prayer experiences and activities that help young people to connect to the symbols, actions, and signs of the liturgy.
- Lead young people in preparation for and reflection upon the liturgy, or find someone who can do this well.
- During youth meetings, or in intergenerational groups, lead young people in discussion and reflection that will help them to actively participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and connect the liturgy with their lives.
- Connect liturgy with life through comprehensive youth ministry.
- Integrate youth into the life and ministries of the faith community.

#### **STRATEGIES FOR THOSE PREPARING THE LITURGY**

- Prepare every celebration with the full assembly in mind, children, young people, and adults.
- Include youth in homily and liturgical preparation teams.
- Include youth in a variety of liturgical roles.



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#### **YOUTH AND LITURGICAL ROLES**

All ministry is a service to the people of God. Liturgical roles are viewed as a service to the assembly and not as an honor for the individual. No one who meets the criterion for these roles should be purposefully excluded.

Neither Canon Law nor liturgical law expressly lists an age requirement for the various liturgical roles. What is important is that those of any age who fulfill these roles are 1) Part of the assembly (they worship regularly in the community); 2) Possess the talent and ability required by these various roles; 3) Strive to lead a Christian life; and 4) Are well trained in the roles following the diocesan guidelines. Ultimately, it is the pastor's responsibility to judge the suitability of a person to a given liturgical role as well as guaranteeing that no qualifying segment of the parish community is excluded from these roles.

An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be fully initiated into the Church and in good standing with the Church. *Immensae Caritas* says the following regarding the choice of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion that they "... distinguish himself or herself by a Christian life, faith and morals: striving to be worthy of this great office; cultivating devotion to the holy Eucharist and acting as an example to the other faithful by piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar." (VI)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are just that, "extra" or beyond the ordinary ministers (priests, deacons, installed acolytes.) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are not required, but should be prepared in the case that not enough ordinary ministers are present.

It is important to note that all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed by the Bishop for a period of two years and are to be commissioned. This means that at least every two years a letter should be sent to the Bishop with the names of potential new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as well as those who wish to be recommissioned. The Bishop will then reply to the request. These instructions are more completely outlined on pp. 4-5 of the Diocese of Columbus Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.



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#### **SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES - RESTRICTIONS**

Scheduling of youth ministry activities on Sunday mornings and on the days of the Easter Triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, unless explicitly permitted by the pastor, is prohibited.



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#### **COLLABORATION WITH HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS MINISTRY**

The youth ministry staff at feeder parishes should explore avenues for collaboration with the campus ministry programs at the appropriate diocesan High School(s).

Coordinators of youth ministry must contact the principal in order to facilitate any school visits, participation in school activities, and the formation of a parish/school plan for youth ministry collaboration.

The principal has full discretion regarding school facilities, faculty, staff, and students.