

“Renewing the Vision” Document on Youth Ministry Summary

The following information is taken from the “Renewing the Vision”: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, approved and authorized for publication by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on June 20, 1997. To order the full document in English or Spanish or any other USCC documents, call 800 235-8722 or go to the US Bishops internet site at www.usccb.org.

Goals for Youth Ministry are as follows:

Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.

Goal 3: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Comprehensive Ministry with Adolescents – It Takes a Whole Church:

The comprehensive approach is not a single program or model of ministry, it is a way of integrating ministry with adolescents and their families into the total life and mission of the church. The comprehensive approach uses all of our resources as a faith community – people, ministries, and programs – in a common effort to promote the three goals of the Church’s ministry with adolescents.

Themes of a Comprehensive Vision:

1. Developmentally Appropriate: Human development and growth in faith is a lifelong journey. 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.

2. Family Friendly: Ministry with adolescents recognizes that the family has the primary responsibility for the faith foundation of young people. The home is a primary context for sharing, celebrating, and living the Catholic faith; we are partners with parents in developing the faith life of their adolescent children.

3. Intergenerational: 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.

4. Multicultural: Adolescents today are growing up in a culturally diverse society. 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. All ministry with adolescents needs to incorporate ethnic traditions, values, and rituals into ministerial programming; teach about variety of ethnic cultures in the Catholic Church; provide opportunities for cross-cultural experiences; and foster acceptance and respect for cultural diversity.

5. 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 for adolescents involves creating healthier civic communities for all young people.

6. Leadership: Adult leadership is responsible to alert the whole community to its responsibility for young people, draw forth the community's gifts and resources, and encourage and empower the community to minister with young people. Of special importance to effective ministry with youth is cooperation among leaders, ministries and programs in a faith community as they work together in a common effort to meet the three goals of ministry with youth.

7. Flexible and Adaptable Programming: Ministry with adolescents must be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the youth within your parish community. The comprehensive approach incorporates the following elements in developing programming:

- A. Diversity in Program settings
- B. Age-Specific programs for young and older adolescents
- C. Family centered programs
- D. Intergenerational programs
- E. Community-wide programs
- F. A balanced mix of programs, activities, and strategies that address the eight components of Youth Ministry (as designed in the "Renewing the Vision" document)
- G. Small-group programming
- H. Home-based programs, activities, and resources
- I. One on One mentoring opportunities
- J. Independent or self-directed programs
- K. Variety of scheduling options
- L. Current technology to facilitate communication in program development and implementation.

The goals for ministry with adolescents help to keep our vision focused on the objectives. The themes provide a continuous thread that endures that ministry with adolescents utilizes all available resources and is all-inclusive.

Components of a Comprehensive Ministry:

Ministry of Advocacy: The ministry of advocacy encourages the Church to examine its practice of fully integrating adolescents into the life of the Church. How are the voices of young people honored and heard in the Church? How are the gifts, talents, and energy of young people respected and utilized within our faith community? It is imperative that the Church models what it advocates for society.

Ministry of Catechesis: Genuine faith is 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 ministry of catechesis recognizes that faith development is a lifelong process. The ministry of catechesis recognizes many learning methods however emphasizes the need to share the core content of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with our youth to build a solid foundation and promote continued growth.

Ministry of Community Life: 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. Community life is nurtured when the atmosphere is welcoming, comfortable, safe, and predictable—one in which all adolescents know that their presence is welcomed, their energy is appreciated, and their contributions are valued. Community life is enhanced when all leaders promote and model an attitude that is authentic, positive, accepting, and understanding – assuring all young people that they are valued and cared for as gifted individuals. Community life is encouraged when our actions are inviting, supportive, and gospel-based. Community life is created when activities build trust and encourage relationships, and are age-appropriate.

Ministry of Evangelization: The ministry of evangelization incorporates several essential elements: witness, outreach, proclamation, invitation, conversion, and discipleship. Evangelization is the energizing core of all ministries with adolescents. All the relationships, ministry components, and programs of comprehensive ministry with adolescents must proclaim the Good News. They must invite young people into a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and empower them to live as his disciples.

Ministry of Justice and Service: 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. 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.

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. Leadership role in adolescent ministry are key. Leaders must be trained and encouraged. This approach involves a wide diversity of adults and youth leaders in a variety of roles. Many will be involved in direct ministry with adolescents; others will provide support services and yet others will link the ministry efforts to the resources of the broader community.

Ministry of Pastoral Care: The ministry of pastoral care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus' care of people, especially those who were hurting and in need. 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). Pastoral care is most fundamentally a relationship-a ministry of compassionate presence.

Ministry of Prayer and Worship: 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 into the sacramental life of the Church, especially eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people; and it fosters family rituals and prayer.