

YOUNG CHURCH ON A MISSION



The vision of Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Scranton is to empower members of the Young Church to answer the call of Baptism by living a life of intentional discipleship and by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout their journey of faith.

1

VISION STATEMENT

Cover design by Steve Wallo

2

MINISTRY
COMPONENTS

3

PLANNING TOOLS

4

PRAYER AND
RESOURCES

Hope-filled Vision for our Young Church

While he addressed them to young people, Pope Francis' words speak to every one of us, don't they? ... And why would I say that? ... Because every one of us seeks something more in life than we can see and touch. Every one of us seeks to make sense of life, to engage life in such a way that we find meaning and purpose and peace, don't we? And while we might say it differently, every one of us wants to leave a mark in some way so that the world will know that we passed through it and have made at least our corner of it better because of our journey.

So when I think of the millennial generation – or however you name yourselves – I see the commitment that *you* have made to *living your faith*. And when I consider your desire to be in relationship with one another in and through the life of the Church – and when I reflect upon *my* experience of just how selfless you are in your willingness to serve the neediest in our midst – do you know what I realize? I realize that *in you*, our present and future Church has much reason to hope.

When Pope Francis challenges us, then, to “leave a mark” in the world, he knows – and so do I – that you're willing to respond – even in the midst of lives that are filled with struggles and pain. For, you see, Pope Francis understands, as we all do, that for all of the blessings that we experience in life, life can be

filled with challenges, can't it? But he also understands that when we look beyond our own suffering to serve a struggling world in need of love, forgiveness and mercy – something that Jesus did on the cross – hope emerges for others and for us. ... And we all begin to experience the resurrection *in this world*. ... In short, Pope Francis' challenge for us to “leave a mark” provides others *and us* with signs of the resurrection and a way forward in life.

So how move forward? How do we leave that mark? ... The starting point is simple. It's something we've all been given: baptism. Pope Francis, in reflecting upon the sacrament, urges us not to forget both the gift and the responsibility that is ours through its reception. “Our baptism changes us, gives us a new and glorious hope, and empowers us to bring God's redeeming love to all, particularly the poor, in whom we see the face of Christ. Our baptism also gives us a share in the Church's mission of evangelization; as disciples, we are also missionaries of Jesus' good news.”



Bishop Bambera's Homily for #leaveamark2016

GOALS OF COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS



- **DISCIPLESHIP:** to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- **CONNECTION:** to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- **GIFTS AND GROWTH:** to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

Components of Ministry with Young People

The U.S. Bishops spell out for us their vision of Catholic Youth & Young Adult Ministry through their documents: *Renewing the Vision* and *Sons & Daughters of Light*. The Diocese of Scranton embraces this vision and is called to implement strategies that will make the vision a reality. It is our starting point. In the spirit of these documents, we define Youth & Young Adult Ministry as:

Ongoing faith formation through which adolescents, young adults and their families live out their baptismal call within the life of the Church.

A comprehensive approach to these ministries employs **eight components**: Evangelization, Community Life, Justice & Service, Prayer & Worship, Leadership Development, Catechesis, Advocacy, and Pastoral Care. These components guide our efforts in proclaiming the Good News and living out the Mission to be the Body of Christ. When our ministry to, with, by and for youth, young adults and their families incorporates all eight of these components, we are effectively reaching the 3 Goals of Comprehensive Ministry shown on above page.

Ministry of Evangelization - Awakening others to the Good News of Jesus within every human situation and seeking to transform individuals and society by being the Good News. Answering the call of Jesus to "go and make disciples."

- Challenges the young Church to continually "go deeper" on their journey toward adult faith and beyond.
This means that the sacrament of Confirmation and/or graduation from a Catholic school is not treated as an end, but as just one more step within an on-going journey.
- Provides opportunities to hear and discuss the witness of the whole faith community, especially their peers.
This means that a serious and concerted effort is made toward providing peer-led retreats, gatherings incorporating a faith-sharing component, and resources and guides for parents to share their faith with their teens.
- Calls the young Church to be evangelizers of others.
This means that the young Church is charged to live out the words attributed to St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words."

Ministry of Community Life - Creating an atmosphere that is welcoming, comfortable, safe and predictable- one in which all know that their presence is welcomed, their energy is appreciated, and their contributions are valued.

- Creates an environment that nurtures meaningful relationships among peers and between all generations.
This means that both age-specific AND intergenerational opportunities are scheduled and implemented.

- Ensures that hospitality is never overlooked or underemphasized.
This means that all church functions and gatherings (especially Mass) incorporate hospitality strategies and resources so that all feel welcome.
- Emphasizes "Church as the People of God."
This means that the "God and me" relationship does not overshadow the "God and we" relationship.

Ministry of Justice & Service - The call 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.

- Provides intergenerational opportunities that try to address the immediate needs of those in our communities and neighboring communities who are living and coping with hardship.
This means that the local Church (sometimes in collaboration with other churches and organizations) not only responds to hardships by organizing and facilitating direct service programs, but communicates to all the faithful that participation in these programs is an expectation of discipleship.
- Educates for justice and challenges all generations to seek out and identify the causes of the hardship and suffering that our direct service tries to aid.
This means that it is not enough just to serve those in need, rather, we simultaneously ascertain why there is hardship in the first place and pursue steps toward eradicating the causes (if possible).
- Allows the Young Church to process their justice and service work through discussion and reflection that weighs their own experience and observations with the wisdom of Scripture & Tradition.
This means that every justice and service program incorporates opportunities for participants to apply Sacred Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching to their action(s).

Ministry of Prayer & Worship - Honoring, praising, and communicating with God. Offering God the gift of ourselves through the Mass, the sacraments, prayers and prayer services.

- Promotes full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy.
This means that the whole assembly is aware that the way in which they participate (or fail to participate) serves as an example to the young and to those preparing for full initiation among us (i.e. they learn how to be worshipping Catholics by observing how we worship!).
- Invites the Young Church to be trained and to serve as liturgical ministers.
This means that teens and young adults serve alongside the older ministers among us and are not separated from the rest of the community with "their own Mass."
- Teaches the Young Church how to pray in ever deepening ways.
This means that developmental and cultural realities are taken into consideration when introducing different prayer forms and pieties.

Ministry of Leadership Development -

Calling forth, affirming, empowering and training the Young Church, their families and other adult volunteers to use their diverse gifts, talents and abilities.



- Empowers the Young Church as peer leaders and in leadership roles within the parish community at large. *This means that a great deal of time and detail is put into developing and forming leadership teams who plan, coordinate, facilitate and evaluate ministerial programs and processes for the benefit of their peers and the whole community.*
- Trains program leaders to facilitate small and large group discussions, activities and prayers. *This means that an adequate number of leadership formation meetings take place before each event/program.*
- Offers the Young Church guidance on how to effectively give witness to the Faith. *This means that personal reflections and witness talks are always workshopped in order to ensure genuineness and avoid manipulative pitfalls.*

Ministry of Catechesis - Echoing the Word of God and passing on the Catholic Tradition to others so that they can grow and mature in their faith.

- Takes an "experience leads to understanding" approach. *This means that experiential learning opportunities are major parts of catechetical curriculums.*
- Takes a "meet them where they are" approach. *This means that we pay close attention to developmental and cultural stages that influence each person's faith journey, thus avoiding the use of "one size fits all" strategies.*
- Takes a "mentorship" approach. *This means that parents, catechists and peer leaders are empowered to see themselves as "catchers of faith;" that is, they pass on the faith mainly by being witnesses.*
- Takes a "sharing our story" approach. *This means that catechesis begins by sharing what we have discovered to be true and just and right through our own experience and through the Word of God. After that, Catholic doctrine and dogma is presented as the result of 2000 years of Christians doing the same thing- trying to live out the Gospel and checking their own experience.*
- Takes a lectionary approach. *This means that the Young Church moves through the liturgical seasons with the rest of the Catholic world, breaking open the Word and journeying deeper and deeper into the paschal Mystery as it unfolds for us week by week.*

Ministry of Advocacy - Engaging the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well youth and young adults are integrated into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community and empowering the Young Church and their families to speak for those who cannot speak.

- Challenges the faith community to view and treat youth and young adults as a part of (and not apart from) the community as a whole.
This means that significant resources are allocated toward these ministries and serious commitments are made toward implementing effective strategies.
- Respectfully listens to the informed ideas from youth and young adults and takes seriously their input.
This means that focus groups and other assessment measures are periodically implemented in order to learn how to best serve the needs of the Young Church.
- Helps the Young Church recognize when and where our Faith calls us to speak out and on behalf of others.
This means that opportunities are offered to join efforts that affirm and protect the sanctity of human life and care for Creation.
- Ensures that the Young Church is represented on key councils and committees with the parish.
This means that, as young people mature in their faith and leadership skills, they should naturally assume additional roles in the adult community.

Ministry of Pastoral Care - The call to be a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus' care of all people, especially those who are hurting and in need.

- Brings healing to images of God that are unhealthy and destructive.
This means that ongoing faith discussions and prayers gently invite the Young Church to move toward a more mature spirituality.
- Employs or enlists listening and pastoral counseling skills and spiritual direction (where appropriately trained).
This means that one on one human resources are easily accessible for those seeking or in need of care.
- Accompanies young adults who are struggling to reconcile their faith with the pressures and social norms of the modern world.
This means that youth and young adults want and need someone to listen, help and guide them, more than reciting rules and catechism to them. They also want to learn to accompany others in this manner.
- Instills a sense of compassion within each youth and young adult.
This means that the Gospel of mercy is unapologetically proclaimed on a regular basis.

PLANNING TOOLS

Office for Parish Life with Youth/Young Adult Advisory Team

1

GOAL ONE: DISCIPLESHIP

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults
Confirmation Prep	Youth Group	World Youth Day	World Youth Day
	#partnerwithFrancis	#partnerwithFrancis	#partnerwithFrancis
Service Projects	Service Learning	Service/Mission	Service/Mission

2

GOAL TWO: CONNECTION

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults
Parish Retreat	Light the Fire	XLT Praise & Social	XLT Praise & Social
	NCYC	Retreats	Retreats
Regional Events	Regional Rallies	Theology on Tap	Theology on Tap

3

GOAL THREE: GIFTS AND GROWTH

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults
Up and Over	ISLI	Confirmation Team	Discernment
	#leaveamark	#leaveamark	#leaveamark
Parish Ministry	Parish/Peer Leaders	Parish/Peer Leaders	Parish/Peer Leaders

PLANNING TOOLS

Your Parish and Regional Team

1

**GOAL ONE:
DISCIPLESHIP**

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults

2

**GOAL TWO:
CONNECTION**

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults

3

**GOAL THREE:
GIFTS AND GROWTH**

STRATEGIES

Middle School	High School Age	College Age	Young Adults

PLANNING

As you plan for parish ministry with youth and young adults, use this table to cross-check that the overall annual program is addressing all of the **Ministry Components described on pp. 3-6.**

- Of course, some activities will meet more than one ministry component
- How might the components be met in ever deepening ways as a young person progresses through the parish program and matures in his/her faith development?
- Are there any ministry components which are consistently missing from your parish approach? How can you gradually build this into the plan?

Specific Youth/Young Adult Program or Activity Date, Time, Place - Persons Responsible	Ministry Component(s) (pp 3-6)

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY WITH THE YOUNG CHURCH

► Resource People

- You and your team — people in your parish who accompany, listen, care
- Shannon Kowalski - Diocesan Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Regional Networks of Youth Ministry Leaders
- Fred Mercadante - Consultant for Youth and Campus Ministry
- Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Advisory Team Members (see listed below)

► Formation/Skills Training for Youth Ministry Leaders/Conferences/Professional Development/Ministry Development

- Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry — contact Kitty Scanlan, Office for Parish Life
- VLCFF (Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation) <https://vlcff.udayton.edu/>
- Center for Ministry Development - Youth Ministry Certificate (<https://www.cmdnet.org/youth-ministry/certificate-in-youth-ministry-studies-program>)
- NFCYM (National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry) <http://www.nfcym.org/>
- MAC (Mid-Atlantic Congress) <http://www.midatlanticcongress.org/>
- Catholic Campus Ministry Association (<http://www.ccmanetwork.org/>)
- Association for College and University Religious Affairs (www.acura-online.org)

► Workbooks, Study Texts, Websites

- USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/young-adults/index.cfm>
- Renewing the Vision <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/young-adults/renewing-the-vision.cfm>
- Sons and Daughters of the Light <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/young-adults/sons-and-daughters-of-light.cfm>
- The Vision of Catholic Youth Ministry: Fundamentals, Theory, and Practice. Edited by Robert J. McCarty, D Min. 2005 by Saint Mary's Press.

► Parent Support/Family Orientation

- Families on a Mission — toolkit from Center for Ministry Development

Blogposts which might be of interest:

- <https://youthspecialties.com/blog/incorporating-parents-in-youth-ministry/>
- <http://childrensministry.com/articles/partnering-with-parents/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-types-parental-involvement-student-ministry>
<http://discipleshipym.com/a-unique-method-of-engaging-parents-in-youth-ministry/>

- <http://gregstier.dare2share.org/a-letter-to-parents-about-keeping-your-teenagers-going-to-youth-group-in-spite-of-their-busyness>

► **Tools for Prayer and Youth Group Activities**

- Busted Halo <http://bustedhalo.com/>
- Center for Ministry Development - Youth Ministry Access (<https://www.cmdnet.org/yma>)
- www.allforgod.com - free Catholic “lesson” plans
- www.rethinkingyouthministry.com (archived materials, not specifically Catholic)
- YouTube resources: outsidedabox, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Youth Ministry Great Games, onetime blind, skit guys, Youth Ministry Great Games, TED, NFCYM

► **Service/Mission Learning**

- A Service Learning Retreat <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/usops-resources/service-retreat-experience-manual-2.pdf>
- Integrating Catholic Social Teaching into Service Learning <https://socialconcerns.nd.edu/content/integrating-catholic-social-teaching-service-learning>
- Creation Justice Ministries (www.creationjustice.org)
- Just Faith Ministries (www.justfaith.org)
- Renew International (www.renewintl.org)

► **Catechetical Tools, Key Concepts for each age group**

- Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/upload/high-school-curriculum-framework.pdf>
- Total Faith Initiative, St. Mary Press <https://www.smp.org/series/33/>
- Cultivation Ministries, Frank Mercadante <http://www.cultivationministries.com/home/services/parish-youth-ministry-help/>
- Senior High Ministry That Works: A Parish Based Initiation Model, Fred Mercadante
- Catholic Youth Works <http://catholicyouthwork.com/all-resources/>
- *National Directory for Catechesis* <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/young-adults/upload/National-Directory-for-Catechesis-on-Young-Adults.pdf>

► **Connections to US and Universal Church: Synod, National Dialogue**

- SYNOD 2018: Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment <http://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses/synod-of-bishops/synod-2018/index.cfm>
- World Youth Day <http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/index.cfm>
- USCCB National Advisory Team on Young Adult Ministry

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

It is essential to build in a time for prayer, reflection and sharing when your team meets. These short reflections have been written to assist you and your team as you come together to discuss and plan.

1. Call to Missionary Discipleship

WORD: The New Evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus. If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: "We have found the Messiah!" All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord who, despite our imperfections offer us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, #120-121)



REFLECTION: Remember a time when you experienced a genuine encounter with God. How has it helped you to life and given you hope? How have you helped a young person to encounter Jesus Christ?

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help us and the young people of our community to recognize the joy offered by Christ. May we always know Your love for us - a love that transcends everything. There is nothing that can separate us from the complete and unconditional love of God. Strengthen us, as a loving faith community, to mirror that love to our young people. Help us to create meaningful spaces and opportunities for young people to encounter Christ in their lives. May we continually strive to be aware of young people, to meet them where they are, and to be the very best and most loving community for young people that we can be - that you call us to be. Amen.



REFLECTION AND PRAYER

2. Connected in Community

WORD: We cannot live a life of discipleship alone. We need others to model lives of discipleship and to accompany us as we grow in the spiritual life and experience ongoing conversion. The accompanying aspect of being a disciple offers us a chance to be truly present to others, especially to those who are struggling. The community of faith is a place of invitation, welcome, and hospitality for all. The liturgical life of the Church is a natural source of accompaniment and comfort for the Christian faithful, which also builds community. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God's love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others. The community of faith, the parish, does not remain focused on itself, but instead sends disciples out on mission.
(*Living As Missionary Disciples. USCCB 2017, pp 15-16*)



REFLECTION: What has been the role of the community in your own faith journey? How can you open your heart unconditionally to young people? How can you advocate for the voices of young people in your parish community and in the larger civic community?

PRAYER: Dear Lord, attune our hearts and minds to each member of our faith community. Help us to be especially open and encouraging to learn of the young people's views, experiences, questions, hopes and dreams, as well as their challenges and struggles. Even in those times that we may not fully understand or relate, strengthen us to build a community that proactively engages with young people; a community that is welcoming, loving and compassionate; a community that personally invites, involves and supports, walks alongside of young people in their journey of faith. Lord, help us all to discern and act on Your will in our lives, that we can be all You desire for us, and that together we can breathe Your love and peace into the world. Amen.



REFLECTION AND PRAYER

3. Gifted for Servant Leadership

WORD: We are called to lead lives deeply rooted in service - service to God, neighbor, self and creation. This is certainly not an easy path, though it is one that will bring us together as God's people who are on mission together, living hope-filled lives. We must be servants who lead. Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling, really the love of Christ within which summons one to want to bring others to know, love, and serve God. One comes to realize that service to God is also an act of leadership. Christian disciples lead as a result of faith, "by seeing with the eyes of Christ...we can give to others much more than their outward necessities. We can give them the look of love which they crave." (Deus Caritas Est #18) My brothers and sisters, I am confident that as we all grow in our understanding of, appreciation for, and commitment to servant leadership, we will find ourselves on a faith-filled path to a future filled with hope and new life.

(*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambera, 2011, pg. 6)

REFLECTION: How have you been the recipient of someone else's service at some time in your life? How can you help to encourage young people to adopt an attitude of loving service while also growing in their leadership skills? What differences will develop in our parishes as this spirit of servant leadership expands?

PRAYER: Dear Lord, fill us with Your love. Let us be so transformed by Your love and truth that we only ever want to share it with others. Inspire the young people of our community to be open and willing recipients of the Gospel. Help us to encourage and strengthen them to truly be agents of Your message amongst their peers and within the wider community. May we all be empowered by the Spirit to be witnesses and apostles of Christ. We pray that we may all gently, yet boldly, proclaim the new freedom, vision and hope that Christ offers to all. Amen.



PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN VIEW OF THE FORTHCOMING SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2018:

»Young people, faith and vocational discernment«

Lord Jesus, in journeying towards the Synod, your Church turns her attention to all the young people of the world. We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives, aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life and always keep their hearts unencumbered. Accompanied by wise and generous guides, help them respond to the call you make to each of them, to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness. Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams and make them concerned for the good of others. Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the foot of the Cross, to receive your Mother as a gift from you. May they be witnesses to your Resurrection and be aware that you are at their side as they joyously proclaim you as Lord. Amen.

Pope Francis



ORACIÓN DEL PAPA FRANCISCO POR LOS JÓVENES EN VISTA DEL SÍNODO DE LOS OBISPOS DE 2018 SOBRE EL TEMA:

«Los jóvenes, la fe y el discernimiento vocacional»

Señor Jesús, tu Iglesia en camino hacia el Sínodo dirige su mirada a todos los jóvenes del mundo. Te pedimos para que con audacia se hagan cargo de la propia vida, vean las cosas más hermosas y profundas y conserven siempre el corazón libre. Acompañados por guías sabientes y generosos, ayúdalos a responder a la llamada que Tú diriges a cada uno de ellos, para realizar el propio proyecto de vida y alcanzar la felicidad. Mantén abiertos sus corazones a los grandes sueños y haz que estén atentos al bien de los hermanos. Como el Discípulo amado, estén también ellos al pie de la Cruz para acoger a tu Madre, recibéndola de Ti como un don. Sean testigos de la Resurrección y sepan reconocerte vivo junto a ellos anunciando con alegría que tú eres el Señor. Amén.

Franciscus

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