

# Diocesan Pastoral Council Youth and Young Adult Recommendations

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Presented November 5, 2011



**Approved by Bishop Stephen E. Blaire**

**March 26, 2012**

**How best to welcome, engage and keep youth and young adults  
active in the church**

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# Executive Summary

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## Diocesan Pastoral Council Youth and Young Adult Recommendations

November 5, 2011

At the request of Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of the Diocese of Stockton and in conjunction with the Diocesan 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary whose theme is “Ever Young in Christ,” the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) has looked at ways to welcome, engage and keep youth and young adults active in the church. The DPC is a consultative body that studies and reflects on pastoral matters, makes recommendations to the Bishop in response to the Diocesan Synod and other significant pastoral issues.

One of the Synod Goals addresses strengthening youth ministry: we will create the structures that support and encourage the participation of young people of all cultures. Through unity, education and spiritual growth young people will be enabled to become passionate and active participants and leaders in our church community, evangelizers and builders of the kingdom of God.

Following its purpose and guiding principles, the DPC has focused on carrying out the Mission of the Church in its study of this important matter of concern. For the last year the DPC has looked and listened carefully at what is going on with youth and young adults in the diocese. Due to the multicultural diversity of the diocese, even the definition of young adult has been a challenge. However, for the purpose of these recommendations a definition of the term *young adult* is presented at the end of the recommendations.

The DPC read and reviewed several foundational documents that include: *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, *Sons and Daughters of Light: A Pastoral Plan for ministry with Young Adults and Conclusions of the First Encounter for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry*. Also the DPC reviewed *The Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Juvenil*, *The Pathways to Ministry Toolkit for Young Adult Ministry* and reviewed *Best Practices and Pastoral Models from the Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*.

Additionally, we have taken these actions:

1. Consultation with the Youth and Young Adult Ministry leaders of the diocese;
2. Presence at workshops offered by Renew International on Becoming More Young Adult Responsive;
3. Consultation with Ken Johnson of Fe y Vida whose presentation offered a comprehensive statistical analysis supported by resources about welcoming, engaging and keeping young adults in the church;
4. Listening sessions with some young adults in the diocese by inviting them to bring their ideas, concerns and issues to a DPC meeting.

Following discussions and deliberation on this matter, the DPC has developed recommendations that we hope will welcome, engage and keep youth and young adults active in the local church.

# Recommendations to Bishop Blaire

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Diocesan Pastoral Council Recommendations on Youth and Young Adult Ministry  
November 5, 2011

## ADDRESSING SYNOD GOAL:

“We will create the structures that support and encourage the participation of young people of all cultures. Through unity, education and spiritual growth young people will be enabled to become passionate and active participants and leaders in our church community, evangelizers and builders of the kingdom of God.”

- Diocesan Synod

## BACKGROUND:

In a church whose median age is dropping but whose leadership is aging, in a church which is more and more characterized by immigrant cultures but whose leadership remains non-immigrant, we remember that Jesus, in his ministerial years, was a young adult whose mission was to seek out and welcome into communion and leadership those who were alienated from ‘the temple and synagogue’ and to include them in his mission of taking the gospel to all peoples.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Make evangelization and catechesis to youth and young adults and their inclusion in the mission and ministry of the church a *necessary* priority of the Bishop and diocesan/parish ministry, planning and budget for the next *three* years.
2. Connect this priority with ARISE which is calling parishes to ongoing revitalization and the engagement of all in the mission and ministry of the church. [This should be a logical step from both the Synod and ARISE.]
3. Connect this priority to the Diocesan 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary whose theme is “Ever Young in Christ.”
4. Make the promotion of this priority a focus and emphasis of the Bishop’s pastoral visitations to the parishes of the diocese.
5. Foundational documents for this priority:
  - a. *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*
  - b. *Sons and Daughters of Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*
  - c. *Conclusions of the First Encounter for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry.*

6. The diocese will continue to raise consciousness and encourage parishes to address the needs of the
  - a. Ever-growing number of Latino youth and young adults
  - b. Youth and young Adults in other ethnic groups.
7. Reflect in the budget of the local church and the parishes this priority of youth and young adult ministry to form disciples.
8. Provide diocesan resources and leadership training to parishes.
  - a. Engage parish councils to embrace the Diocesan 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary theme of “Ever Young in Christ”
  - b. Enable simple social analysis on the parish level:
    - i. “A Community-Wide Ministry Profile”
    - ii. Analysis of parish ethnic and cultural groups.
  - c. Provide consulting teams to walk parishes through assessment tools.
9. Identify and share best practices among similar parishes
10. Expand pastoral ministry and pastoral care to students in institutions of higher learning in the diocese.
11. Resource parish ministries that regularly serve young adults, particularly baptismal preparation for parents of infants, the Catechumenate [for adults and families with children of catechetical age], and preparation for the sacrament of matrimony.
12. Develop and resource parish programs for couples, the newly married and for those with young children.
13. Invest in modes of communication that might welcome and be most accessible to young adults.

**For clarification:** The definition of “Youth and Young Adult” varies from culture to culture. Within English speaking ministry a “youth” is in high school and a “young adult” is between 19 – 39 years of age. Within Hispanic or Latino ministry a “young adult” is defined as a single unmarried person between 16 – 30 years of age. For the purposes of ministry in the Diocese of Stockton these recommendations address ministry to youth who are in high school (13 -18 years of age) and young adults who are 18 (post high school) to 35 years of age.

# Suggested Implementation

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Diocesan Pastoral Council Suggested Means to Implement the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Recommendations  
November 5, 2011

## *Bishop*

1. As the leader of the Local Church, the bishop will promote the evangelization of youth and young adults to the Catholic Community.
2. He will share the DPC recommendations and implementation plan with pastors and recommend that that pastors pass on these recommendations to all parish ministries and staff as information and for action.
3. He will invite pastors and parish leadership to engage in a fact finding process about youth and young adults in their own parish.
4. He will encourage Parish Pastoral Councils to make communication with and about youth and young adults one of their priorities.
5. He will ask each existing diocesan office to draw attention to this age group in its offer of services and resources to parishes.
6. During the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the diocese he will develop a focus question to raise consciousness about youth and young adults at all diocesan and parish gatherings. The question may be phrased as “How are youth and young adults engaged in what we are doing in this gathering?”
7. As parishes conduct a self-evaluation to prepare for his formal parish visitation, he will ask how the issues of youth and young adults are being addressed.
8. He will include a meeting with young adults during his pastoral visitation.

## *Diocesan Offices*

1. The Office for Priests and the Office for Pastoral Life Formation will make ministry to youth and young adults the subject of a Priests' Study Week. Topics will include but not be limited to the opportunities for evangelization available at the time of Baptism and Marriage.
2. The Offices for English and Spanish Speaking Youth and Young Adults will identify, explore and promote some common pilot projects, i.e., best parish practices with this age group, offer of a formal office visit, Theology on Tap.
3. Young Adult Ministry Offices, with the assistance of the Office for Communications, will develop and offer resources for the parish: i.e., ads for parish bulletins or Face Book. National documents about youth and young adults will be used as primary resources.
4. Young Adult Ministry Offices will identify already tested programs as resources for ministry to college students especially those in community/junior colleges.
5. The School of Ministry will offer a specialization that trains parish leaders for ministry with youth and young adults.
6. In response to the needs of families the diocesan offices will collaborate with the bishop, School of Ministry and Catholic Charities to offer resources and programs that support and strengthen family life.
7. The Office for Communication In collaboration with other diocesan offices will offer training to parishes in ways to communicate using new technology.
8. The Office for Communications will develop a logo to be used in connection with the diocesan priority to welcome, engage and keep youth and young adults in the church.

## *Parish*

1. Each parish will examine its budget to see if ministry to youth and young adults is a priority.
2. Parish Pastoral Council will examine and evaluate if Youth and Young Adult Ministry is a part of the agenda of the parish community. This council will identify methods for addressing emerging needs among youth and young adults including: welcoming into faith-sharing groups, spotting potential leaders, and assuring the presence of young adults on the parish pastoral council and parish committees.
3. Parish Pastoral Council agendas regularly will include Youth and Young Adult Ministry concerns and will discuss the issues of this age group. The Council will recruit young adults

to participate in parish planning of events. It will review best practices to find ways to stay connected to young adults.

4. Parish staff will find ways to maintain personal contact with families after their reception of the sacraments by using technology or other means of communication.

## *Deanery*

1. The deanery will outline the needs and challenges specific to the region with regard to youth and young adults.
2. The deanery will include county, city and state demographics and statistics within its area and use this data as it develops a regional response to the needs and challenges of youth and young adults.
3. Within a deanery pastors will invite parish leadership, i.e. parochial vicars, lay ecclesial ministers, parish and finance councils, to name and develop common strategies to welcome, engage and keep young adults in the church.
4. The pastors of neighboring parishes or of a deanery will encourage common youth functions in their area.
5. Using a round table format about ministry to youth and young adults, parish teams that include the pastor and associates will share best ministry practices with other parish teams in the deanery.
6. Pastors will consider hiring one bilingual minister to oversee the training of volunteers who work with youth and young adults in the region.

# Parish Young Adult Ministry Assessment Tool<sup>1</sup>

**STEP ONE:** Develop a Community-Wide Ministry Profile<sup>2</sup>

*Use the following seven ministries to develop a profile of your (1) programs that respond to or involve young adults, (2) resources you could use in ministry with young adults and, (3) opportunities for ministry with young adults that your community is not currently using.*

Ministry	Programs	Resources	Opportunities
Community Life			
Catechesis			
Evangelization			
Justice and Service			
Liturgy and Sacraments			
Leadership			
Prayer and Spirituality			

<sup>1</sup> Adopted from "Center for Ministry Development 2010"

<sup>2</sup> For internal parish use only

**STEP TWO:** Assess your responsiveness<sup>3</sup>

To determine the *responsiveness* of your current ministry efforts, review your ministry profile. Rate each ministry using the following rating scores:

*A = excellent—a real strength*  
*B = good*

*C = adequate—room for growth*  
*D = poor—needs lots of improvement*

Rating	Ministry	Think about the gathered, small group and one-on-one or individualized programs being offered in this area
	<b>Community Life</b>	Examples could include parish socials, coffee houses, donut Sunday, happy hours, etc.
	<b>Catechesis</b>	Include such things as adult religious education series, sacramental preparation, Bible study, videos, etc.
	<b>Evangelization</b>	Include such things as programs for alienated Catholics, outreach to those graduating from high school or college, programs on the message of Jesus, etc.
	<b>Justice and Service</b>	Include such things as education sessions on Catholic Social Teaching, Habitat for Humanity builds, advocacy programs, etc.
	<b>Liturgy and Sacraments</b>	Examples could include marriage and baptism preparation, Sunday liturgies, rituals, reflections on the season of Lent or Advent, etc.
	<b>Leadership</b>	Examples could include young adults on the parish pastoral council, leadership training, personal invitations to young adults to lead, etc.
	<b>Prayer and Spirituality</b>	Include such things as retreats, different prayer experiences like Taize, meditation, ethnic traditions, etc.

<sup>3</sup> For internal parish use only

**STEP THREE:** Analysis and recommended action <sup>4</sup>

1. What strengths does your community bring to ministry with young adults?

To complete this task, identify three ministries that are responding effectively to young adults and/or involving young adults more fully in the life of the faith community. Try to specify which method in the three programs (gathered, small group, individualized) is the strongest or the weakest in each ministry.

Strongest Ministries	<u>Circle</u> Strongest Program Method	<u>Circle</u> Weakest Program Method
1	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized
2	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized
3	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized

2. Identify those ministries which need improvement to become more responsive to young adults. Specify the ministries and which methods need to be improved in the three programs (gathered, small group, or individualized).

Ministries needing improvement	<u>Circle</u> Program Method (s) needing improvement
1	Gathered Small Group Individualized
2	Gathered Small Group Individualized
3	Gathered Small Group Individualized
4	Gathered Small Group Individualized

3. Decide on a course of action – choose one option – and develop a plan to implement your decision:

- Take what you are already doing and make it more young adult friendly
- Create a focused program specifically for young adults
- Develop a comprehensive ministry with and for young adults

<sup>4</sup> For internal parish use only

# Parish Youth Ministry Assessment Tool

**STEP ONE:** Develop a Community-Wide Ministry Profile

*Use the following eight ministries to develop a profile of your (1) programs that respond to or involve Youths, (2) resources you could use in ministry with Youths and, (3) opportunities for ministry with Youths that your community is not currently using.*

Ministry	Programs	Resources	Opportunities
Community Life			
Catechesis			
Evangelization			
Justice and Service			
Liturgy and Sacraments			
Leadership			
Prayer and Spirituality			
Advocacy			

**STEP TWO:** Assess your responsiveness

To determine the *responsiveness* of your current ministry efforts, review your ministry profile. Rate each ministry using the following rating scores:

**A** = excellent—a real strength  
**B** = good

**C** = adequate—room for growth  
**D** = poor—needs lots of improvement

Rating	Ministry	Think about the gathered, small group and one-on-one or individualized programs being offered in this area
	<b>Community Life</b>	Examples could include parish socials, festivals, donut Sunday, etc.
	<b>Catechesis</b>	Include such things as adolescent catechesis, sacramental preparation, Bible study, videos, etc.
	<b>Evangelization</b>	Include such things as programs for alienated Catholics, outreach to those graduating from high school or college, programs on the message of Jesus, etc.
	<b>Justice and Service</b>	Include such things as education sessions on Catholic Social Teaching, Habitat for Humanity builds, Young Neighbors in Action, etc.
	<b>Liturgy and Sacraments</b>	Examples could include leadership roles in Sunday Liturgy, Advent and Lenten rituals, reflections on the season of Lent or Advent, Christian Initiation, assist with baptism, first communion, etc.
	<b>Leadership</b>	Examples could include Youths on the parish pastoral council, festival and events committees, bible study leaders, Media (facebook, blog, twitter) Editors, leadership training opportunities, personal invitations to Youths to lead, etc.
	<b>Prayer and Spirituality</b>	Include such things as retreats, different prayer experiences like Taize, meditation, ethnic traditions, spiritual direction, etc.
	<b>Advocacy</b>	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 i.e. Liturgy, Social Events, Parish Gatherings, Community Service

**STEP THREE:** Analysis and recommended action

1. What strengths does your community bring to ministry with Youths?

To complete this task, identify three ministries that are responding effectively to Youths and/or involving Youths more fully in the life of the faith community. Try to specify which method in the three programs (gathered, small group, individualized) is the strongest or the weakest in each ministry.

Strongest Ministries	<u>Circle</u> Strongest Program Method	<u>Circle</u> Weakest Program Method
1	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized
2	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized
3	Gathered Small Group Individualized	Gathered Small Group Individualized

2. Identify those ministries which need improvement to become more responsive to Youths. Specify the ministries and which methods need to be improved in the three programs (gathered, small group, or individualized).

Ministries needing improvement	<u>Circle</u> Program Method (s) needing improvement
1	Gathered Small Group Individualized
2	Gathered Small Group Individualized
3	Gathered Small Group Individualized
4	Gathered Small Group Individualized

3. Decide on a course of action – choose one option – and develop a plan to implement your decision:

- Take what you are already doing and make it more Youth friendly
- Create a focused program specifically for Youths
- Develop a comprehensive ministry with and for Youths