

Youth Ministry Conversations in the Spirit

Reflection Guide

Use these passages and questions as a resource for prayerful reflection and discernment.

Christus Vivit

“We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it.” (CV 64)

“We need to use above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational, and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakens hope and desires. Young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at.” (CV 211)

“Our institutions should provide young people with places they can make their own, where they can come and go freely, feel welcome and readily meet other young people, whether at times of difficulty and frustration, or of joy and celebration.” (CV 218)

“The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years.” (CV 243)

- Does our ministry convey messages of love, generosity, hope, etc. in the events and opportunities we offer? How am I a part of those efforts? How can we better express this message in our ministry?
- Does our ministry provide a space that is open and welcoming for young people? Are there ways I can be more open and welcoming?
- Do our young people feel incorporated into our parish community? How can I help foster that connection?

Renewing the Vision

“First, the changes in our society present the Church with a new set of issues. All across America, far too many young people are struggling to construct their lives without an adequate foundation upon which to build.”

“All ministry with adolescents must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting and challenging them to become his disciples. For this reason, catechesis is an essential component of youth ministry and one that needs renewed emphasis.”

“Promoting the growth of young and older adolescents means addressing their unique developmental, social, and religious needs and nurturing the qualities or assets necessary for positive development. It also means addressing the objective obstacles to healthy growth that affects the lives of so many young people...as well as the subjective obstacles to healthy growth.”

- How can we make sure our ministry is working to give young people an adequate foundation on which to build their life in a way that is accessible for *every* adolescent?
- How can we present the Gospel and catechize young people in a way that is inviting and incorporates healthy challenge? Do I allow myself to be challenged by the Gospel?
- How can we make sure our ministry is able to break through those objective obstacles (such as poverty, racial discrimination, and social injustice) and reach adolescents? How can I participate in this work?
- How do we build a ministry that addresses all the developmental needs of our young people?

Listen, Teach, Send

“Effective ministries with young people must be dynamic movements inspired by the Holy Spirit, where all generations, cultures, and communities ‘journey together,’ advancing toward ‘experiencing a shared encounter with the living God.’”

“Effective ministry guides youth and young adults to choose how they will transform the world through the gift of their lives. We must regularly nurture and grow a culture of vocation and discernment within all settings and activities in which young people participate.”

“The communal dimension of the Catholic faith shows us that those who accompany youth and young adults are most effective when they work in collaboration with the entire community. In particular, we look to other ministerial efforts, especially those in family ministries, to work together for the accompaniment and formation of young people. All ministries with youth and young adults are part of our universal family of faith.”

- Does our ministry give space for people of all generations, cultures, and communities to participate in the formation of young people? Do I allow myself to be formed by people of different generations, cultures, and communities than my own?
- How can we make our ministry a place for young people to adequately discern their vocations? How can I help others learn to hear God’s voice?
- The family is the first place of formation for young people. How does our ministry support families in their role as formators of young people? How can I help my family better live out the Gospel and be a place where faith can grow?

Discussion Questions

We will be sharing our answers to these questions when we gather together. Please have responses prepared beforehand.

1. What are the most pressing needs of our middle school and/or high school youth ministry at this time?
2. Where is our middle school and/or high school ministry excelling?
3. Where does our middle school and/or high school ministry need to grow?