

**August 10, 2011**

Updates and revisions (mostly related to grammar), have been made.

**August 4, 2011**

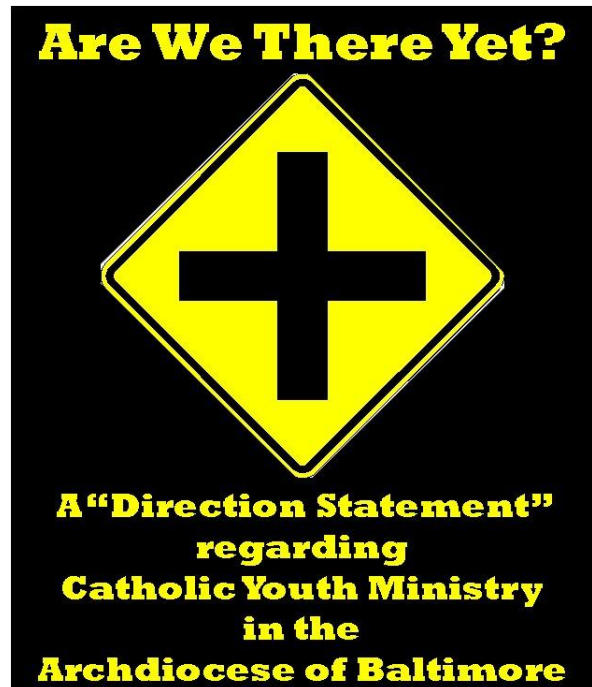
May the Peace of Christ be with you

The Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry has been working in collaboration with our Youth Ministry Advisory Council in developing the enclosed document. Please note: IT IS A DRAFT of the document. It is not complete yet!

Your notes, comments, concerns, and affirmations related to this would be greatly appreciated and essential as we bring this document towards completion and realization as a “direction statement.”

If you have the opportunity over August and September, we would appreciate your responses to this. If you gather locally or regionally and discuss this, PLEASE do consider inviting someone from our office into your conversation.

All responses back before September 24 regarding this document will be recorded and reported back to the Youth Ministry Council in their next meeting. We would anticipate a final publication of this in early 2012.



peace and all good things-

*D. Scott Miller*

*Opera Christi non deficiunt, sed proficiunt*

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## Are We There Yet?

<< Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Archbishop Edwin O'Brien - - 150 words>>

Anyone who has traveled a journey, especially a journey with young people, will recognize the question... “Are we there yet?”

Thirty-five years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a *Vision of Youth Ministry*. In this document, they referred to the walk towards Emmaus<sup>1</sup> where the transformative moment of the account is in the experience of Jesus in the Eucharist, that which we still hold central to our efforts in youth ministry. The Bishops emphasized the story as “a guiding image for ministry with its emphasis on the relationship between young disciples and their Lord, a relationship characterized by presence, listening, faith sharing, and celebration.”<sup>2</sup>

Almost fifteen years ago, the US Bishops built upon this statement with *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. In this document, they made “a call to make ministry with adolescents a concern for the entire church community.”<sup>3</sup> They reemphasized Blessed John Paul II’s encouragement to have the Church become a “traveling companion of young people.”<sup>4</sup>

As new generations enter into the experience of Catholic youth ministry- as participant or parent or adult volunteer or parish leaders – each has a right and a responsibility to call out wondering “Are we there yet?” Are we fully living out the vision of youth ministry?

The terrain and route of the Church’s path in accompanying young people is changing and evolving. If we were to be travelling with a guiding global positioning system, the destination of young people’s relationship with the Lord remains constant and unwavering. Yet, the congestion of traffic for young people attention, and multiple options for vehicles for ministry with young people, and changing maps of how parish and school communities have all been environmental changes affecting our sense of how to reach our destination, our there. Our youth ministry GPS would likely be constantly “recalculating our route.”

While youth culture has become the dominant influencer on the surface of our popular culture regarding fashion, entertainment, and technology, underneath it all is there is a deeper underlying splintering of sub-cultures where young people are desperately seeking affinity and a sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:13–35

<sup>2</sup> *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995), 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

28 belonging.<sup>5</sup> As Church, we are not “there” yet in our response. “Catholic teenagers, who represent  
29 nearly one-quarter of all U.S. teens, stand out among U.S. Christian teenagers as consistently scoring  
30 lower on most measures of religiosity... on many of a variety of religious beliefs, practices, experiences,  
31 commitments, and evaluations.<sup>6</sup>”

32 In publishing their *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical*  
33 *Materials for Young People of High School Age*, the US Bishops remind us that we can be better about  
34 achieving our destination in putting young “people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy,  
35 with Jesus Christ<sup>7</sup>” In *YouCat, a Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Pope Benedict follows this  
36 theme in telling the youngchurch that “You need to know what you believe. You need to know your  
37 faith with the same precision with which an IT specialist knows the inner workings of a computer, You  
38 need to understand it like a good musician knows the piece he is playing. Yes, you need to be more  
39 deeply rooted in the faith than the generation of your parents so that you can engage the challenges  
40 and temptations of this time with strength and determination.<sup>8</sup>”

41 All the while, the conditions within our parishes are changing. Greater emphasis is needed to further  
42 address the influences of our community. The economic downturn is having its impact as is the need for  
43 greater stewardship with our physical, fiscal and human resources available to us. Attention must be  
44 given towards our populations within the city, in Mountain Maryland, and among our immigrant  
45 populations lest they not have the similar service let alone opportunity for the sacraments available  
46 throughout the Archdiocese. Further collaboration will be needed within parishes as well as regions to  
47 assure that we remain committed in our ministry with the youngchurch.

48 We each have to answer the question of “Are we there yet?” to our own satisfaction. Throughout this  
49 document, we will share reports and information that wherever your perception is regarding the “there”  
50 in youth ministry, we most likely have not achieved that destination and, more importantly, might need  
51 to reconsider our pathway.

52 In his visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI weighed in with his own response. Mindful of “our  
53 need to speak to the hearts of young people, who, despite their constant exposure to messages contrary  
54 to the Gospel, continue to thirst for authenticity, goodness and truth” he continued, “Much remains to

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<sup>5</sup> Mark Oestreicher, *Youth Ministry 3.0: A Manifesto of Where We've Been, Where We Are & Where We Need to Go* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2008), 65 – 71

<sup>6</sup> Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 194

<sup>7</sup> Pope John Paul II. *On Catechesis in Our Time Catechesi Tradendae*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987), #5

<sup>8</sup> Christoph Schönborn, et al *Youcat: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisc, CA: Ignatius Press 2011), 10

55 be done, particularly on the level of preaching and catechesis in parishes and schools, if the new  
56 evangelization is to bear fruit for the renewal of ecclesial life in America.<sup>9</sup>”

57 In the same address, he encouraged us to no longer “go about business as usual.”<sup>10</sup>”

58 In May 2011, Pope Benedict addressed the members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New  
59 Evangelization in preparation for the 2012 October General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops  
60 addressing the topic "New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." In his message, he  
61 identifies us as being within a crisis that “bears in itself traces of the exclusion of God from people's  
62 lives, of a generalized indifference toward the Christian faith itself, to the point of attempting to  
63 marginalize it from public life.”<sup>11</sup> We are not there yet; we can no longer go about business as usual.

64 Throughout the first half of 2011, the members of the Archdiocese of Baltimore Youth Ministry Council  
65 discussed from their own personal experiences what has been confirmed by recent studies regarding  
66 youth ministry. Catholic youth ministry has also reached a tipping point where the status quo can no  
67 longer be maintained. This moment is calling for changes in the ways we approach ministry with young  
68 people. We are not there yet; we can no longer go about business as usual.

69 Catholic Youth Ministry leaders can no longer concern themselves solely with ministry uniquely towards  
70 young people. We must find ourselves fully immersed as well within ministry with the families and  
71 parents of young people, within the life of the parish community where the young people need to be  
72 fully participating, and empowering adult volunteers for ministry with young people.

73 Therefore, recognizing these “signs of the times,” the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and  
74 the Archdiocese of Baltimore Youth Ministry Council have affirmed the following regarding leadership  
75 for parish youth ministry throughout the Archdiocese. These components have been discerned as  
76 essential towards future effectiveness in youth ministry.

77 In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we:

- 78 > **invite young people towards discipleship** in Jesus Christ and engage them within parish life
- 79 > **value and serve parents** in their primary responsibility for faith formation of their children
- 80 > **engage the full parish community** in herministry with young people
- 81 > **emphasize the role of a core team** and the significance of enlisting many adults into the

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<sup>9</sup> Pope Benedict XVI “Responses of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Questions Posed by the Bishops” April 16, 2008 [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20080416\\_response-bishops\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080416_response-bishops_en.html)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Pope Benedict XVI “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promotion the New Evangelizations” May 30, 2011 [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2011/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20110530\\_nuova-evangelizzazione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110530_nuova-evangelizzazione_en.html)

82 ministry and lives of young people  
83 > **acknowledge the need of integrity** of the Catholic Youth Ministry leader within a parish  
84 community.

85 Although these are values that have been previously stated in various past Youth Contact meetings  
86 conducted by the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, we now strongly encourage parish youth  
87 ministry leaders to seriously re-configure their ministries to reflect these standards. We commit to  
88 doing the same, having our own office examine and evaluate our own efforts in Catholic youth ministry  
89 based on these components.

90 In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we are at a moment of “recalculating our route.” We have farther to  
91 travel and more to be done. And, so, we begin anew on our journey with prayer:

92 *Hear, O Lord, our humble prayers, and guide Your servants safely in the path of Your salvation.*  
93 *Watch over us as we travel alongside young people*  
94 *step-by-step in faith towards a deeper relationship with You.*  
95 *Shelter us with Your assistance as we face together the changes and challenges of our ministry.*  
96 *We ask all this, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

97 Worksheet:

- 98 **1. A key moment in my personal journey with youth ministry thus far has been:**  
99 **Why?**  
100 **2. In what ways has that moment impacted my own sense of “destination” for young people in**  
101 **ministry?**  
102 **3. Are we there yet?**  
103 **What will it take?**

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## Young People

106 << Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Young People of Youth Council - - 150 words>>

107 “The Church is alive. And the Church is young.”

108 So claimed Pope Benedict XVI in the first homily of his papacy. He expanded on these thoughts stating  
109 that “She [the Church] holds within herself the future of the world and therefore shows each of us the  
110 way towards the future. The Church is alive and we are seeing it: we are experiencing the joy that the  
111 Risen Lord promised his followers.<sup>12</sup>”

112 Our vision statement reminds us that “The Church and world need the faith, gifts, energy, and fresh  
113 ideas of young people. The entire Church, and in a special way ministry with adolescents, must empower  
114 young people for their mission in the world. We must ensure that young people are well equipped for  
115 their special mission in the world. All of our efforts to promote an active Christian discipleship and  
116 growth in Catholic identity must lead toward mission. This is our special responsibility to the young  
117 generation.”<sup>13</sup>

118 Are we there yet?

119 Younger members of the Youth Ministry Council expressed a desire for that “radical experience.” They  
120 seek to be connected to Jesus, they seek discipleship. They resound with a challenge to “re-weird-ify  
121 Christianity, highlighting Jesus’ radical actions and peculiar self-giving love.” They expect that we, as  
122 church, “be who we say we are — people who obviously follow Jesus, which makes us ‘weird’ in a  
123 culture based on self-actualization and self-fulfillment — or they’re just not going to bother with us at  
124 all. They have discerned that this experience is not only personal for each individual, but must also be  
125 rooted within a strong sense of community as well.<sup>14</sup>

126 Young people are open to the invitation to discipleship. In *Our Hearts are Burning Within Us*, the US  
127 Bishops call attention to the *General Directory for Catechesis* which identifies a mature faith as one that  
128 has grown beyond the initial conversation into “a into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Pope Benedict XVI “Homily, Mass, Imposition of the Pallium and Conferral of the Fisherman’s Ring for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome” April 24, 2005  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato_en.html)

<sup>13</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 50.

<sup>14</sup> WhyIsMarko. (2011, February 11). the future of youth ministry, part 5 [Blog post]. Retrieved from  
<http://whyismarko.com/2011/the-future-of-youth-ministry-part-5/>

<sup>15</sup> See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States* (Washington, DC: USCCB publishing, 2004) and Congregation For The Clergy *General Directory for Catechesis* (Washington, DC: USCCB publishing, 1998) 82

129 Disciples are works in progress, those who continue to experience conversion in their lives because of  
130 their on-going relationship with Jesus. They make a conscious living decision to be a follower of Jesus  
131 Christ. Disciples strive to explicitly confirm their lives towards the Lord's teaching and struggle to attain a  
132 lifestyle that exemplifies the Beatitudes. They recognize their own need to live not alone with an  
133 individualized faith but to grow together fruitfully within community. Further, they recognize the  
134 commitment of discipleship, taking up the cross as a way of life, bearing witness to the Gospel with  
135 both good times and bad, ups and downs, successes and failures, betrayals and reconciliation.

136 Yet, counter to this expectation of a Church full of disciples, young people often perceive the adult  
137 church as dry, not alive nor young. Of those who leave the Catholic Church, almost 80% do so before  
138 reaching 23 years old. Most former Catholics say they gradually drifted away from Catholicism.<sup>16</sup>

139 The young people of the Youth Ministry Council believe that the ones who stay in the Church are those  
140 who have met Jesus and experienced Jesus in their faith community, while those who leave are likely to  
141 not have developed a faith that truly became their own. Our young people indicated that "kids should  
142 be pushed more into the parish community."

143 In a culture of abundance, young people still find themselves hungry for the holy, for depth and meaning  
144 toward their lives. They speak of their longing for Jesus' invitation to "come and follow." They watch  
145 the Church. They are all too aware that "It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life," as  
146 Pope Benedict indicates, in speaking of New Evangelization, "that the Church reminds us that we will  
147 evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus -- the witness of  
148 poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of  
149 sanctity."<sup>17</sup>

150 They desire to have reasons "for" their church. In a culture that does not value faith and religious  
151 affiliation, they often find themselves ill-equipped to respond to their non-Catholic friends. Young  
152 people desire a vehicle upon which to act upon their natural desire to seek justice within the world.  
153 Given the experience of their own search for meaning and desire for understanding the workings of the  
154 world, they will be open to understanding the language of faith. They are willing "to act out their  
155 religious commitments in ways that are salient and meaningful to them."<sup>18</sup> and will connect with a  
156 parish or community that helps them to do so.

157 Our young people are willing to claim their faith and go against tide of the results of the National Study  
158 for Youth and Religion which indicate that "emerging adults are friendly to an individualistic and  
159 pluralistic view of religion, thinking that many religions are true, that it is ok to pick and choose what

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<sup>16</sup> "Faith in Flux: Changes in Religious Affiliation in the U.S." Washington, D.C.: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2009

<sup>17</sup> Pope Benedict XVI "Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promotion the New Evangelizations" May 30, 2011

<sup>18</sup> Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton *A Faith of Their Own* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2011)

160 one believes, that they do not need to be part of a religious congregation, and that people can practice  
161 more than one religion.<sup>19</sup>”

162 Therefore, a Catholic youth ministry leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore should:

163 > Strive to ensure that all young people of the parish receive an explicit invitation towards  
164 discipleship in Jesus Christ and participation from their faith community.

165 > Engage the systems of the parish community to ensure that young people are actively drawn  
166 into responsible participation into a Catholic faith community that is both clearly alive and  
167 committed towards serving within Christ’s mission in the world.

168 > Create an engaging environment where the personal and spiritual maturity of young people of  
169 the community is a valued concern of the entire faith community

170 Worksheet:

171 **1. Do young people perceive your parish as alive and young? Why? Why not?**  
172 **Do you?**

173 **2. In what ways do or can young people receive “that radical experience” of faith?**

174 **3. Are we there yet?**  
175 **What will it take?**

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<sup>19</sup> Christian Smith with Patricia Snell *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2009)



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## **Families**

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<< Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Parent - - 150 words >>

179 “The Church can contribute significantly toward strong, life-shaping families for young people by  
180 equipping, supporting, and encouraging families with adolescents to engage in family faith  
181 conversations; to teach moral values; to develop healthy relationships and use good communication  
182 skills; to celebrate family rituals; to pray together; to participate in shared service activities; to explore  
183 and discuss vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life; and to nurture close parental relationships  
184 and parental faith.<sup>20</sup>”

185 The National Study for Youth and Religion reminds us that the role of parents has not been exhausted by  
186 the time of their children’s adolescence. “When it comes to religion, parents are in fact hugely  
187 important.... One of the most powerful factors [in influence upon young people] was the religious lives  
188 of their parents.<sup>21</sup>”

189 Are we there yet?

190 In *A Faith of Their Own*, Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton, after analyzing the National Study  
191 on Youth and Religion research, remind us that “Adolescents can and do thrive... when surrounded by  
192 social scaffolding that offers both space to grow into their newly acquired autonomy and guidance to  
193 help them figure out what to do with it<sup>22</sup>.” Their claim that “Parents are the most important source of  
194 social scaffolding for youth during this complex period of their lives<sup>23</sup>” resonates with what we already  
195 know from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

196 The role of parents is of such importance that it is impossible to provide an adequate substitute. Parents  
197 are the first and most significant formatters of faith of their young people<sup>24</sup>. Yet, have our parishes  
198 adequately developed systems and programs to effectively partner with parents and families?

199 Chap Clark, in his book *Hurt*, argues that the social and relational turmoil of the 1960s set in motion a  
200 chain of events that left many adults unable to cope with the demands of life. Therefore, adolescents, a  
201 group much in need of parental guidance, were a prime casualty of this development. As young people  
202 find themselves segregated more and more away from the adult community in school, after-school  
203 sports and activities, and religious youth groups, Clark suggests that they consciously or unconsciously  
204 experience a “systematic abandonment” by adults. This is a condition that he suggests is the root of the  
205 fragmentation and calloused distancing that are the hallmarks of adolescent culture.<sup>25</sup>

206 Parents, however, are often neither confident in sharing in matters of faith nor have the familial support  
207 systems of previous generations. Parents need the expressed encouragement and support of the parish  
208 and school community. At the very same time they are receiving the push-back for adolescent  
209 autonomy, their young people need them the most.

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<sup>20</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 12.

<sup>21</sup> Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, 285

<sup>22</sup> Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton , 168

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> See Catechism of the Catholic Church 2221

<sup>25</sup> See Chap Clark *Hurt: Inside the World of Today’s Teenagers*, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Publishing Group, 2004

210 Nonetheless, “most adolescents in fact still very badly want the loving input and engagement of their  
211 parents — more, in fact, than most parents ever realize. They simply want that input and engagement  
212 on renegotiated grounds that take seriously their growing maturity and desired independence. All too  
213 often, however, parents misinterpret their teenager’s signals about renegotiated relationships as simple  
214 demands to be left alone and, for whatever reasons, they readily comply. So just at a time when  
215 teenagers most need engaged parents to help them work out a whole series of big questions about  
216 what they believe, think, value, feel, are committed to, and want to be and become, in many cases, their  
217 parents are withdrawing from them.<sup>26</sup>

218 Yet, the work of fostering faith in adolescents and families is not the challenge of previous generations  
219 but for the church today. It is a work that has been passed from generation to generation.

220 “St. Augustine said that one must not think that the grace of evangelization was extended only to the  
221 Apostles and with them that source of grace was exhausted,” reminded Pope Benedict XVI when  
222 speaking of the New Evangelization. “This source manifests itself when it flows, not when it ceases to be  
223 poured out<sup>27</sup>.” Families and parents must be source of the flowing inexhaustible grace of  
224 evangelization, boldly proclaiming the Gospel towards the next generation in anticipation that it may  
225 spread to all the nations.

226 Therefore, a Catholic youth ministry leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore should:

- 227 > Consistently declare the prominence of the role of parent in transmitting faith to young people
- 228 > Equip, empower, and encourage parents to present the Good News of Jesus Christ to their
- 229 children.
- 230 > Provide models and templates for family faith experiences.

231 Worksheet:

- 232 **1. What are the challenges that families must face in attempting to present the Good News?**
- 233 **2. If parents were truly perceived as “the first and most significant formatters of faith of their**  
234 **young people” what would be the implications in our present youth ministry efforts?**
- 235 **3. Are we there yet?**  
236 **What will it take?**

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<sup>26</sup> Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, 284

<sup>27</sup> Pope Benedict XVI “Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promotion the New Evangelizations” May 30, 2011

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## Parish

239 << Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Parish Leader - - 150 words>>

240 “Parishes should be a place where young people are welcomed, grow in Jesus Christ, and minister side  
241 by side with the adults of the community. In parishes, young people should feel a sense of belonging and  
242 acceptance as full-fledged members of the community.<sup>28</sup>”

243 Recently, Archbishop O’Brien wrote in the *Catholic Review* addressing the declining number of priests as  
244 an urgent issue for the Church. He reminded us, however, that “the opportunity to create a more  
245 dynamic Church that helps people encounter the Living God must be our primary goal in planning for the  
246 future of our Church.<sup>29</sup>”

247 Are we there yet?

248 A Catholic youth ministry leader who imagines his/herself only in service to the young people of the  
249 parish is no longer sufficient. Youth ministry leaders are to now find themselves serving from within the  
250 convergence point of ministry with young people, families, and the parish community.

251 This calls for a greater understanding of the Ministry of Advocacy. It “engages the Church to examine its  
252 priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and  
253 work of the Catholic community. It places adolescents and families first by analyzing every policy and  
254 program—domestic, parish-based, diocesan, and international—for its impact on adolescents and  
255 families.<sup>30</sup>”

256 Pope Benedict when speaking of the New Evangelization reminisces that “In past decades it was still  
257 possible to discover a general Christian sense that unified the common feeling of whole generations,  
258 growing up in the shadow of the faith that had molded the culture.<sup>31</sup>” If we are to maintain future  
259 generations, we must continue the tradition of conveying a general Christian sense within a culture  
260 overwhelmed by conflicting messages.

261 In the Exemplary Youth Ministry research, an emphasis placed upon a “thoroughly intergenerational’  
262 approach to ministry where “young people are welcomed and expected to participate and lead in  
263 church-wide ministries, including worship, education, fellowship, outreach, and decision-making<sup>32</sup>. How  
264 youth ministry understands and serves the mission of the Church must become more closely aligned  
265 with the methods of the parish community. Not only does this attach the service of young people  
266 towards the full community, but it encourages the full community to recognize such service as real and  
267 meaningful.

268 If parishes “wish to nurture emerging lives of purpose, meaning, and character – instead of confusion,  
269 drifting, and shallowness – they will need to do a better job of seriously engaging youth from early on

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<sup>28</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 13

<sup>29</sup> Edwin O’Brien, Challenges are Opportunities for Future of our Church, *Catholic Review*, April 14, 2001

<sup>30</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 25

<sup>31</sup> Pope Benedict XVI “Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promotion the New Evangelizations” May 30, 2011

<sup>32</sup> Roland Martinson, Wes Black, John Roberto *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry* (St. Paul, MN, EYM Publishing, 2010) 53-54

270 and not cut them adrift as they move through their teenage years... It will not be enough simply to  
271 purify one's theological ideas or to ramp up new programs supposedly 'relevant' to young people.<sup>33</sup>

272 Therefore, a Catholic youth ministry leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore should:

- 273 > Advocate for the inclusion of young people in the mission of the full parish community
- 274 > Engage the parish towards examining the "youth-friendliness" of the faith community.
- 275 > Cultivate in youth a sense of sacred space within the parish community, while ensuring that
- 276 young people experience the richness and giftedness of all of the generations within the faith
- 277 community

278 Worksheet:

279 **1. Are youth a part of the parish community or apart from it?**  
280 **How?**

281 **2. How might the mission of the parish community and the mission of youth ministry be more**  
282 **closely aligned?**

283 **3. Are we there yet?**  
284 **What will it take?**  
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<sup>33</sup> Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, 299

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## **Adult Leadership / Core Team**

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<< Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Volunteer - - 150 words >>

288 The whole community is called to reinvigorate the missionary spirit to give the new proclamation that  
289 the people of our time await.

290 The youth ministry field has long believed it takes a whole village to raise children, rejecting the “lone  
291 ranger” model of leadership. The National Study for Youth and Religion confirms these sensibilities,  
292 weighing in with their research regarding religious socialization. “The more non-parental adults (that)  
293 teenagers have in their religious congregations to whom they are personally tied, the more teachers and  
294 role models they have, coming from different social positions, to train them in right believing and living  
295 of their faith... increases the chances that they will remain religiously committed and practicing five  
296 years later.”<sup>34</sup> Can a parish community ever have enough adult volunteers collaborating on behalf of  
297 young people?

298 Are we there yet?

299 Ministers are not meant to minister alone. Our best example regarding this is scriptural, the story of  
300 Moses from Numbers 11. The burden and responsibility of leadership has weighed heavily upon Moses  
301 and he complained to the Lord. The heaven sent instruction is to “Assemble for me seventy of the  
302 elders of Israel... and bring them to the meeting tent. When they are in place beside you, I will come  
303 down and speak with you there. I will also take some of the spirit that is on you and will bestow it on  
304 them.”

305 As ministers, we do not gather volunteers for our sake, but for the sake of God who allows us to both  
306 share in the burden and spirit of ministry with others<sup>35</sup>. As youth ministry leaders, we recognize the  
307 many benefits of the addition of many additional elders, for the sharing of our labors, for the richness of  
308 the experience of young people, for allowing the adults of the community to live out their faith.

309 What we have learned from the Exemplary Youth Ministry research is that a congregation’s  
310 effectiveness in ministry with young people is directly connected to the dedicated participation of  
311 volunteer adults and parents. The mature faith of these committed adults leaders is an important  
312 contribution towards nurturing young people towards their own faith. It makes a difference when  
313 adults are willing to engage young people in honest, healthy, real relationships. It is essential, therefore,  
314 for the community leadership and the Catholic youth ministry leader to be intentional about recruiting,  
315 training, and encouraging adults to living out their baptismal call in utilizing their gifts and talents within  
316 youth ministry.<sup>36</sup>

317 The experience with parish and religious communities can be formative in the process of young people’s  
318 religious development. “Youth recognize the support of adults in these institutions, thrive on personal  
319 relationships with adults... that express acceptance and encouragement, are energized by opportunities  
320 for social service and appreciate personal and intellectual challenges from their religious institutions.”<sup>37</sup>

321 Our vision statement proclaims that “ministry with adolescents mobilizes all of the resources of the faith  
322 community in a comprehensive and integrated approach: Part of the vision of youth ministry is to

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<sup>34</sup> Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, 234

<sup>35</sup> Kenda Dean and Ron Foster *The Godbearing Life* (Nashville, TN Upper Room Books, 1998) 89-90

<sup>36</sup> Roland Martinson, Wes Black, John Roberto *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry* 211-212

<sup>37</sup> Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton *A Faith of Their Own* 169-170

323 present to youth the richness of the person of Christ, which perhaps exceeds the ability of one person to  
324 capture, but which might be effected by the collective ministry of the many persons who make up the  
325 Church. This approach involves a wide diversity of adult and youth leaders in a variety of roles necessary  
326 for comprehensive ministry.”<sup>38</sup>

327 Our commitment towards inviting faith-filled adults to engage young people in relationships, however,  
328 must always include the safety and care of young people. If these relationships are a value then  
329 maintaining the highest level of child protection must be a value. If these relationships are a value then  
330 ensuring that adults are adequately prepared for their ministry must be a value. If these relationships  
331 are a value then true collaboration in sharing both the burden and spirit of ministry with others is a  
332 value.

333 Adult relationships are not just meant as tools of influence for (or over) another generation. To be in  
334 relationship following the example of Jesus calls for us to engage in the sharing of each other’s lives,  
335 towards being with one another both in our joys and sufferings, and witnessing towards the active  
336 engagement of the Lord in each others’ lives.

337 Therefore, a Catholic Youth Ministry Leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore should:

- 338 > Articulate, in collaboration with pastoral leadership, a vision for ministry with young people
- 339 within the faith community
- 340 > Empower a wide range of parish adults for ministry and service
- 341 > Prioritize the recruitment, training, and support of adults for the variety of needs of parish
- 342 ministry with young people.

343 Worksheet:

- 344 **1. In what ways does the membership of the parish community claim possession or delegate its**
- 345 **responsibilities toward the next generation?**
  
- 346 **2. Do we need seventy significant adults involved in our parish’s ministry with young people?**
- 347 **More? Less? Why?**
  
- 348 **3. Are we there yet?**
- 349 **What will it take?**
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<sup>38</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 24

351

## **Catholic Youth Ministry Leadership**

352

<< Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Office Staff - - 150 words>>

353

The vision statement, while almost fifteen years old, remains relevant today when it states that “The Church's ministry with adolescents needs to enter a new stage in its development... We are confident that the Catholic community will respond by utilizing our considerable creativity, energy, and resources of ministry with adolescents.”<sup>39</sup>

357

Are we there yet?

358

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we are blessed with a strong cadre of competent, energetic, creative, faith-filled youth ministry leaders. The many distinct approaches to Catholic youth ministry in our parishes and schools are a credit to these leaders who are generous with their commitment to ensuring that the Archdiocese provides resources and programs that offer young people a sense of “something larger” than their own parish or school experience.

363

Over the past years, the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry begins each September with a Youth Contact meeting. In previously meetings, we have discussed youth ministers as change agents, as *Salt* and *Light* regarding diversity and Catholic lifestyle, as partners with parents, as agents of evangelization, as coordinators of volunteers, as catechetical leaders, and as orchestrator/conductor of gifts within the parish community.

368

All the while, survey after survey, research book after noted author — all suggest what we have all suspected all along: Youth ministry and Catholic youth ministry are not fully hitting the mark. We know that we are not there, just yet!

371

While this document has added more updated quotes, we have not trod much new ground here.

372

Except this: We walk the path of Catholic youth ministry in a new direction. We ask those who assume the role of Catholic youth ministry leader to be held more accountable for their tri-fold ministry within young people, families and parents, and the parish community in general and, more specifically, with shared leadership with many, many other adults.

376

In the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Department of Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we will start first by examining our own programs and efforts. How well do we serve the parishes and schools of the Archdiocese in working towards these goals? We anticipate that our Youth Ministry Council will make sure that we are held responsible to justify ourselves by the standards set in this document.

381

We cannot do this alone. We are asking that pastors and pastoral life directors in their role of supervision regarding youth ministry efforts also begin to evaluate the efforts of youth ministry within

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<sup>39</sup> *Renewing the Vision 7*

383 their parish communities by these standards. Furthermore, they should be a source of discussion  
384 towards peer-accountability within our regions, mentoring relationships, and collaborative efforts.

385 Changes abound. The economic downturn is impacting our parish budgets and staffing decisions. Now  
386 is not the time to retrench our ministry with youth, but to expand who we serve within the parish  
387 community.

388 Recent conversations about projected numbers of priests available to parish communities, retirements  
389 and the need to further engage the laity in the ministry of the Church yielded to broader and more lively  
390 discussions about Mass schedules, regional approaches to ministry and more dynamic liturgies and  
391 parishes.<sup>40</sup> We are called to be leaders with our parish communities assuring that our communities are  
392 alive and young.

393 Now, more than ever, we are called to be a people of faith and hope. The Exemplary Youth Ministry  
394 research affirms that "the strong, vital, mature faith of adult leaders in youth ministry is one of the most  
395 important contributors to youth ministries that nurture young people of vital, committed Christian  
396 faith."<sup>41</sup> We must not be afraid to boldly share the Good News with one another. We can no longer  
397 find ourselves segregated or isolated because of race, language, or difference in ecclesial approaches...  
398 nor by age. "The most important thing the Church can do through the ministries that serve youth is  
399 surround young people with love and care while sharing the teachings of the Church with clarity,  
400 through witness and application of the faith."<sup>42</sup>

401 A Catholic Youth Ministry Leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore should

- 402 > Have a formation plan designed towards fostering personal, spiritual, and professional growth
- 403 > Actively engage with the Archdiocese in ensuring that collaborative efforts of ministry with
- 404 young people utilize our creativity, energy, and resources.
- 405 > Ensure that they are accountable
  - 406 >> Towards the expectations set by their parish leadership;
  - 407 >> Towards the standards set in the *Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders*, and
  - 408 >> in remaining ever vigilant in assuring a safe environment for young people

409 Worksheet:

- 410 **1. What do we expect of our parish youth ministry leader?**  
411 **What should a youth ministry leader expect of the parish?**
- 412 **2. How can we best articulate and educate regarding our expectations within the whole parish**

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<sup>40</sup> Edwin O'Brien, Challenges are Opportunities for Future of our Church, Catholic Review, April 14, 2001

<sup>41</sup> Roland Martinson, Wes Black, John Roberto *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry* 212

<sup>42</sup> Tom East, "Community at the Crossroads: The Relationship Between Adolescents and the Church" National Initiative for Adolescent Catechesis <http://adolescentcatechesis.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/East-Adolescents-and-Church.pdf>



413            *community?*

414            **3. *Are we there yet?***

415            *What will it take?*

416

417

## *Prologue*

418

<< Featured Sidebar: Are We there Yet? Hurley - - 150 words >>

419 May our walk with the Church's service with her young people in the Premier See of Baltimore start  
420 anew.

421 A prologue is an opening to a story that establishes the setting and gives background details. Usually, it  
422 belongs at the beginning of a document, not the end. Yet, it is appropriate for our own story of service  
423 with the youngchurch in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Here, we begin.

424 This document started with a reminder of the importance of the story of the Emmaus Walk to our  
425 ministry.

426 When the two disciples started their journey towards Emmaus, their path was defined as much by the  
427 point of their departure as it was in their destination towards Emmaus. They were abandoning their  
428 compatriots in Jerusalem. It was likely that they had more of a sense of where they were leaving than  
429 where they were going.

430 In the moment of recognition within the Eucharist with the One that they suddenly realized was the  
431 Lord, they found their hearts had been burning within them and set off immediately back to Jerusalem.  
432 Again, it was likely that they had more of a sense of where they were leaving than where they we going.  
433 On their journey back, who could have possibly foreseen the life of a disciple of the risen Jesus Christ,  
434 the joys and the risks?

435 The disciples' journey was on the road to Emmaus, yet they never fully reached their destination. After  
436 an encounter with the Risen Jesus in the Eucharist, they changed course. They dismissed the question of  
437 "Are we there yet?" and, with Good News to share, re-routed themselves in service to their Lord and  
438 community.

439 When we ask, "Are we there yet?", the question is not necessarily about destination. Who can foresee  
440 where our lives as disciples of the risen Jesus Christ will it us? It is, however, about our choice of path  
441 and travelling companions.

442 The very heart of the Church's mission takes along the path of following Jesus – the challenge of  
443 discipleship. Our ministry invites young people to do the very same – to undertake "the effort of a noble  
444 and authentic adventure, such as that of the following of the Gospel."<sup>43</sup>

445 Pope Benedict's aspiration for the Council on New Evangelization is for all the church as well: "I hope  
446 that in the work of these days you will be able to delineate a plan able to help the whole Church and the  
447 various particular Churches, in a commitment to the New Evangelization; a plan where the urgency for a  
448 renewed proclamation will take care of formation, in particular for the new generations."<sup>44</sup>

449 In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we reclaim this moment along our journey with youth ministry to be a  
450 moment of "recalculating our route." We most certainly have farther to travel and more to be done.  
451 We know that we must include more travelling companions for young people from the ranks of families  
452 and parents as well as from the leadership of the Church. We know that we can think of no finer place  
453 for young people to experience the Gospel message, the Good News about Jesus Christ, than from

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<sup>43</sup> *Renewing the Vision* 10

<sup>44</sup> Pope Benedict XVI "Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promotion the New Evangelizations" May 30, 2011

454 within their own family and parish faith community. And we know that we must make course  
455 corrections in the paths of our ministry efforts to ensure that our new route takes hold.

456 So, we begin.

457 We begin anew recalling our prayer for the journey:

458 *Hear, O Lord, our humble prayers, and guide Your servants safely in the path of Your salvation.*

459 *Watch over us as we travel alongside young people*

460 *step-by-step in faith towards a deeper relationship with You.*

461 *Shelter us with Your assistance as we face together the changes and challenges of our ministry.*

462 *We ask all this, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*