

YOUTH MINISTRY



[Youth and Young Adult Ministry](#)

[World Youth Day](#)

[Resources for Young People](#)

"Youth Ministry is important in the life of the Church! In this grace-filled moment, you and I are called, by the Lord, to do this important ministry.

It is an exciting time to do Youth Ministry in this 'moment of grace,' especially with the election of Pope Francis. His humility, simplicity and example is prompting the world, especially among young people, to give the Church a 'second look'.

I come to you as a pastor of the Church and a fellow pilgrim in the journey of faith to help read the signs of the times. In order to adapt our ministry in this changing world, we need to be clear about what we are being asked to do by the Lord Jesus. We are being asked to help young people answer the single most important question of their lives: the call to evangelization.

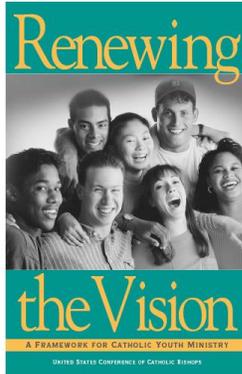
In the digital age, Youth Ministry is bringing the Good News to young people by the art of living well - and it begins and ends with the Lord. May we remain faithful to the challenges of our own time, and using the gifts before us, including technology, may we bring many people to live well in this life and the next."

*-His Excellency, The Most Reverent Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut
Member of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth*

The Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment will take place in October 2018. For more information, visit the [Synod webpage](#).

WHO ARE YOUTH?

Young people are defined as young ages 12-18 in junior high or high school.



Renewing the Vision

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry builds on the fine tradition begun by the 1976 document, *A Vision of Youth Ministry*. To respond to the new challenges and opportunities of our day the Catholic bishops of the United States offer this document as a blueprint for the continued development of effective ministry with young and older adolescents.

[Read Renewing the Vision](#)

(online version)

[Purchase your own copy of Renewing the Vision](#)

RENEWING THE VISION: GOALS FOR MINISTRY WITH ADOLESCENTS

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

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends"

- Jn 15:13

Youth ministry should begin to teach adolescents what a life of discipleship looks like. As baptized members of the Church, youth are called to serve others and to serve Christ, bringing about the Kingdom of God in unique ways. It is the youth minister, pastor, or parent's job to empower adolescents to live Christian lives of discipleship. Youth are empowered when they are welcomed into a Church that speaks to their hearts with the "joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist" (St. John Paul II, 1995 *World Day of Prayer for Vocations*). When youth frequently engage the Gospel, challenge their spiritual lives, and are shown the adventure of discipleship through the Church they can begin to commit themselves totally to Jesus Christ in concrete ways.

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



There are four notable communities that help youth grow in faith. They are the Family Community, the Parish Community, the Catholic School Community, and the Youth-Serving Organizational Community. When youth are drawn to these communities, they better understand what it means to live in a faith community.

Family Community

The family is the "first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world" (*Follow the Way of Love*, p.8). The family is responsible for the spiritual, moral, and overall development of adolescents by faith sharing in the home. This requires parents to love and support their children, but it also challenges adolescents to "enhance family life with their love and faith" and to bring new understandings and skills into the home that will enrich family life (*Renewing the Vision*). Every family member plays a role in building a community where love can dwell.

Parish Community

It is important for youth to engage the Parish community because parishes "are the place where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament" in a concrete way (*Renewing the Vision*). Youth-friendly parishes do three things to foster adolescent spiritual growth. First, parishes should allow youth to serve the parish along with adults. When adolescents feel welcomed into the parish community as full-fledged members, they are more likely to identify as a community member. Second, parishes must allow youthful energy and vision in parish activities. Young people have a great deal to offer parish ministry, and when they can express their faith through meaningful roles, they develop a spirit of commitment to the parish community. Finally, if parishes truly desire to become "youth-friendly", it is crucial to value adolescents. This means listening to them and responding to their needs, as well as providing them with facilities and money to enable their growth as disciples. If the parish wants youth to commit to parish life, the parish must commit to the development of the youth.

"In partnership with parents and parishes, Catholic schools prepare young people to become full and active members of the Catholic Church."

-Renewing the Vision Catholic School Community

The Catholic School is a living faith community where adolescents can deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith both inside and outside of the classroom. Campus ministry should demonstrate effective ministerial strategies to youth including effective religious education, service projects, retreats, and other activities. Catholic education and campus ministry must strengthen and empower youth to use their gifts and talents in the wider Church community.

Youth-Serving Organizational Community

It is important for youth to go beyond their family, parish, and school communities to serve the greater Church community. Catholic service leaders have a duty to reach out to young people in order to form them as young disciples who can bear witness to the gospel message. Service organizations are communities where youth can learn about joyful giving while being spiritually challenged to love others as Christ does.

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



"The Church is concerned for the whole person, addressing the young people's spiritual needs in the context of his or her whole life" (*Renewing the Vision*). Youth ministry in the Church should promote holistic growth and development; that is, growth and development of the entire person. Ministers and leaders must listen to the specific developmental, social, and religious needs and nurture them accordingly.

RENEWING THE VISION: NEW CHALLENGES IN ADOLESCENT MINISTRY

Challenge #1: Our society and culture neglect youth and their well-being. It prioritizes false images of success and wealth rather than the well-being of youth.

**"We are deeply concerned by America's neglect of young people. The United States is losing its way as a society by not ensuring that all youth move safely and successfully into adulthood."
-*Renewing the Vision***

Today's youth are plunged into the distracting worlds of consumerism and technological isolation, which damages relationships including both familial ties and a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. Our secular culture does not offer the proper economic, spiritual, and personal tools to help youth become disciples of Jesus Christ. In short, our youth are settling for less in a society that ignores them. We must show our youth that the Church maintains a culture of love and discipleship. Our challenge is to show youth the fullness a life of Catholic Christian discipleship entails.



Challenge #2: Our youth do not always receive proper developmental assets from their parents, their school environments, and even their churches.

In addition to the large-scale culture, sometimes young people's families, school, and other living environments do not provide essential development assets. These assets help youth avoid high-risk behavior such as drug use, anti-social behavior, and premarital sexual activity. Studies found that as assets increase, high-risk behavior decrease, and positive outcomes such as school success, pro-social behaviors, and responsibility increase. Our challenge is to help families, schools, and other communities promote healthy living standards so our youth can grow into responsible, successful adults.

Challenge #3: Leaders and parishes must incorporate contemporary approaches to youth ministry, modernizing ineffective methods and establishing a foundation for growth.

In particular, parish and youth leaders must adjust and be flexible to the ever-changing needs of youth. Old and tired models of youth ministry must be updated and must match the energy and vitality of youth in the world. *Renewing the Vision* provides a number of resources that can help develop new strategies for youth ministry. Our challenge is not to water down the gospel message for mass reception. Instead, our challenge is to discover how youth can live out the gospel message in their daily lives.

WORLD YOUTH DAY

Pope John Paul II announced the institution of World Youth Day in December, 1985, as an annual gathering of youth and young adults (between the ages of 16-35) for prayer, worship and celebration of the Catholic faith. The event is observed annually in dioceses and every two to three years at an international gathering.

For 30 years, World Youth Day has been impacting the lives of young adults, allowing them to witness around the world to the Truth and life of the Catholic faith. To learn more about WYD 2016 in Krakow as well as other World Youth Day opportunities and information visit the official websites: www.wydusa.org and www.krakow2016.com

