

# Diocesan Vision for Parish Youth Ministry



**"The goal of diocesan and parish youth ministry is to provide age-appropriate opportunities which will lead our youth to a life-changing encounter with Christ which will nourish a faithful, fruitful and joyful friendship with Him and His Church."**



# Diocesan Vision for Parish Youth Ministry,

## Diocese of Ogdensburg

Parish Youth Ministry across the Diocese of Ogdensburg is manifested in different expressions depending on circumstances at the parish level. These differences are dependent upon parish size, number of youth, proximity to other parishes and to population centers, needs of the particular community and staffing available to minister to the needs of youth.

Since needs are different across the diocese, there is no “one size fits all” program for the Diocese to adopt and recommend to parishes for youth ministry. Instead, the diocese offers this Vision for Parish Youth Ministry to guide parishes in establishing or enhancing their youth ministry.

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**Too often youth ministry is considered an *optional* ministry. The option is exercised if and when: there is enough time, energy, money, volunteers, experience. We need to agree that this ministry is essential. The following steps serve as a guide.**

**Step One:** Pastors should acknowledge and establish youth ministry as essential. Parishes must serve young people as the future of the Church. The pastor leads by establishing the focus and communicates it with those who collaborate with him: Pastoral Council, Finance Council, staff, parish groups and the whole parish. If the roof were leaking, we would not think fixing it optional, rather essential. We all need to agree, the roof is leaking!

**Step Two:** Pastors should recruit like-minded people with a genuine ability to relate to young people to function as a core youth ministry team. Time spent vetting key adults and older teens for this core is time well spent. Team members should be chosen for their Christian lifestyle, their knowledge of the faith, their love of Christ and ability to witness to that love in their life, community and world.

**Step Three:** Pastor and core team members should envision what youth ministry would look like in each configuration or parish. This should begin by reviewing current parish youth ministry efforts to determine how they are already in line with this Diocesan Vision.

**Essential elements for successful parish youth ministry.** The core team should strive for a healthy balance of active, prayerful and fun filled fellowship opportunities which give youth occasions to grow in three basic ways: discipleship, service and knowledge.

1. **Discipleship:** To become a close follower of Christ is to have a personal and communal relationship with him as friend, Lord and Savior.
2. **Service:** To know and love Christ is to follow in His footsteps. Service means extending a loving and helpful hand to the Church family as well as the larger secular community in the name and person of Christ.
3. **Knowledge:** To have a relationship with Christ requires one to know His teachings. Ignorance of Christ’s life, teachings or commands is to be ignorant of Him.

To assist pastors and parish staff in giving youth opportunities to grow in discipleship, service and knowledge, it is helpful to expand on each topic.

**Discipleship:** To become a close follower of Christ is to have an intimate personal and communal relationship with Him as friend, Lord and Savior. Youth should be exposed to the following aspects:

1. **Prayer:** To develop and deepen a relationship with God, youth leaders are called to help teens grow in their personal prayer life, as well as prayer with family and community. Participation in the faith life of the whole community is essential and should encourage regular attendance at the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Source and Summit of our faith. The very act of prayer binds us as community.
2. **Fellowship:** The communal aspect of discipleship should include an intergenerational component, not just a "me and Jesus" approach. Emphasis on belonging to the Family of God is a key component.
3. **Vocations:** To discover their vocation in Christ, one must know oneself and through personal testimony and witness of those ministering to them, find their own vocation as the key to live life on this earth to its fullest. Living life to its fullest is to live it with the meaning and joy that will lead to the ultimate goal of heaven.
4. **Apologetics:** To be challenged by being given occasional opportunities to explain what they believe and why they believe so that when asked, young people can respond with confident knowledge, gentleness and charity. "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..." 1 Peter 3:15 (RSVCE).
5. **Mission:** To bring the Good News of Jesus Christ into every human situation is to be joy-filled heralds of the Gospel, witnessing to the love of Christ. Evangelization invites teens to know Christ personally and then go and spread His word to all. Our young people need to know that our Catholic Faith *is mission*. Our faith is most fruitfully lived in the midst of the Church whose mission is to "make disciples of all nations." (Mt 28:19) Our faith is not lived merely for ourselves, but is rather inherently missionary, moving us into the "unknown" in order to make the Gospel known so that all may come to believe in Jesus Christ.

**Service:** To serve is to extend a loving and helpful hand to the Church family as well as the larger secular community in the name and person of Christ. Too often service opportunities are primarily directed to the Catholic Community or ministries within the church building. Opportunities should be provided to serve both within and outside the church.

1. **Involving Youth in Church Liturgical Ministries:** It is common place in most parishes to see young people serve at the Mass in the role of Altar Server. This is a wonderful and time honored opportunity for our young to get a close up experience of the Holy Mass. In addition, efforts should be made to involve them in the other liturgical roles such as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Usher and Greeter as their age and maturity allow. While young people serving in these roles at Masses with a particular youth focus happen periodically, youth are encouraged to see themselves as a valuable part of the regular worship of the people of God.

2. **Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy:** To help teens know, live, and exercise the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy is to help them actualize the Beatitudes. Drawing on the social teaching of the Church and exploring the lives of Catholics who put these teachings into action such as Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa can be a powerful tools.
3. **Service Trips:** To venture outside the parish with a group to serve in the name of Christ can give youth an opportunity to enhance their leadership abilities and gain a sense of accomplishment. The experience of praying and serving with many other teens and adults and seeing the Universal Church in action can help them grow in their faith.
4. **Networking:** To network is to give youth opportunities to join with other Catholic parishes or faith communities to extend the kindness and compassion of Christ, sharing especially with the most needy. Working outside parish boundaries helps youth to appreciate the vastness of the Church and to appreciate locking arms with others in service of a common cause. Networking is also a great source of ideas and support for the youth minister.
5. **Pilgrimage:** To take a spiritual journey to which young people joyfully respond “yes” to God's invitation is to know Him more fully. By undertaking a cultural and spiritual quest, youth can experience a deeper personal growth and come to appreciate the universality of the Church.
6. **Social Justice Issues:** Responding to needs of social justice can be framed through direct service such as participating in writing legislators, educating others on the issues and possible responses, joining in peaceful witness in defense of Church teachings on abortion and immigration, etc. (Also see Knowledge section)

**\*\*Take Note:** The pastor and the core team should strive to provide the balance necessary between the educational and social aspects of youth ministry. While knowledge is important, care should be taken not to structure youth ministry as merely an extension of Faith Formation Classes. One way this can be accomplished is by presenting knowledge in the form of periodic discussions or workshops and not as a lesson. Youth should be helped to make real-life connections with the knowledge being presented.

**Knowledge:** To acquire a personal knowledge of Christ requires one to know Him and His teachings.

1. **Prayer – Personal and Communal:** Prayer should be part of every youth ministry experience by offering youth regular opportunities to pray with and for one another. “After experiencing Jesus in prayer, the disciples desired to learn to pray themselves and the Lord taught them” (Lk 11:1-13). Regular prayer experiences teach by example how to pray by praying. The youth minister’s own prayer life is a powerful witness by leading youth in spontaneous prayers of thanks, praise, and petition. Opportunities should be made to involve youth in the many rich prayer styles of the Church such as the rosary, Eucharistic adoration, *Lectio Divina*, Divine Mercy Devotions, etc.
2. **Morality:** Youth Ministry should help teens understand the human person as a unity of body and soul as well as what it means to be a rational being with a sexual body that lives in the world and simultaneously is made for life everlasting.
3. **Saints:** Our young people should have an awareness of their individual call to holiness as reflected in the lives of our most recent Papal Saints, St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II and other contemporary saints. Our youth should also be exposed to our local saints. A current list of our local saints and their connection with our neighboring areas would include: St. Br. Andre’ Bessette (Montreal and the Northeast); St. Sr. Marianne Cope

(Utica and Syracuse); The Jesuit Martyrs of Auriesville: St. Isaac Jogues, St. Rene' Goupil and St. John LaLande; and our Native American, St. Kateri Tekakwitha (Auriesville, Fonda and Kahnawake, Quebec). A pilgrimage of our youth to the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs' in Auriesville, St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, or any of the smaller shrines in the places above, would connect our youth more deeply to their living spiritual heritage.

4. **Scripture:** Saint Jerome once said, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." While it is expected that Faith Formation classes expose youth to the basics of Scripture, youth ministry is uniquely situated to give young people an opportunity to read, listen and pray with Scripture in ways that will carry them into adulthood. Efforts should be made to confirm young people have grasped how to distinguish the different forms of Biblical truths taught in Faith Formation and so assist their understanding Catholic Biblical interpretation. Focusing on Scripture as divine communication to us as Church and individuals and providing youth opportunities to pray with Scripture would be beneficial.
5. **Catholic Identity:** Our young people should be able to understand what it means to be a Catholic and how that affects their choices and daily lives.
6. **Personal Witness:** Our young people should have an understanding of how living out their faith provides and sets examples to those in their family, parish, school and community.
7. **Social Justice Issues:**
  - a. Develop an understanding of the basis of social justice, the Church's position on specific issues (life and dignity of the human person, option for poor and vulnerable, environmental stewardship, etc.)
  - b. The necessary response to social issues can be exemplified through the lives of people who embrace a Catholic response to social justice.
8. **Community Life:** Help youth to understand the Church as a community of believers and discover their individual role in it. Provide experiences that build an authentic community atmosphere in the parish, diocese, and Church. Active involvement in the community life of the Church through a variety of parish and diocesan activities can foster a real-world understanding of community.
9. **Vocations:** Youth should be provided encounters with those living the married life, the committed single life, the vowed religious life and Holy Orders. Conversations with those in these vocations should provide youth an opportunity to hear how Christ is revealing himself to the individual through their God-given call. The Diocesan Vocation Director should be invited to interact with youth to help them discern how and where God is calling them.

**Funding:** If, as addressed in Step One, youth ministry is to be considered essential, then it must be funded. Funding levels will vary greatly depending on parish resources and the youth ministry needs of the parishes. One parish might be ready and able to dedicate its resources for a full-time youth ministry position, while another might act more modestly. At whatever level a parish is able to fund youth ministry, a dedicated line item in the annual budget should be considered a priority. Leaky roofs are understood as needing immediate essential attention and resources, youth ministry is no less essential. Investing in God's children should not be a hard sell to the people of God. To foster a sense of ownership and accomplishment, youth should participate in fundraising opportunities for special projects or initiatives.

**Choice of Youth Minister(s):** As acknowledged earlier in this document, choosing the right person(s) to be engaged in youth ministry is essential. When deciding how to configure youth ministry personnel, there are numerous options. One might hire a full-time person who coordinates youth ministry in conjunction with other parish work such as Faith

Formation or that person can be exclusively dedicated to youth ministry. In addition, one can hire a part-time youth minister or one can rely exclusively on volunteers. Those decisions must be arrived at after careful consideration of all conditions. A paid minister exclusively focusing on youth ministry would provide the most concentrated response to the great need in the Church today.

As a consideration, multiple parishes even with different pastors might share a full-time youth minister. Sharing a full-time person between parishes has some significant benefits over one parish hiring a full-time minister to do youth ministry with other parish responsibilities. The ability to maintain a focus on youth ministry is enhanced when a person's energies are not divided.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of characteristics and skills when recruiting and vetting candidates as potential ministers to youth.

**Characteristics and Skills for Potential Youth Ministers:**

1. Relatable /Personable. The candidate for youth minister who is the best educated, most mature and dedicated individual, while all desirable traits, would be at a distinct disadvantage in youth ministry if they lacked an ability to relate to youth.
2. Contagiously joyful, compassionate, empathetic and positive.
3. Respectful of boundaries. Those who work with youth typically have a great love for young people and enjoy the many appropriate rewards which that work brings. Candidates for youth ministry should be able and willing to set solid boundaries in their relations with youth, having the best interest of the youth in mind. The primary motivation for serving in youth ministry should not be the many personal rewards.
4. Responsible and able to exercise appropriate authority.
5. Good communicator, organizer and be able to work collaboratively with pastor and others involved in youth ministry.
6. Self-starter and be personally driven.
7. Lover of and actively living the faith.
8. Flexible with personal schedule.
9. Hold an appropriate level of knowledge regarding the faith commensurate with the responsibilities entrusted to them.

**Youth Minister Sample Job Description:** See Supplements A 1-3.

**Suggested Programs:** As stated earlier in this document, no two parishes have the same exact needs or set of circumstances. For those seeking ready-made programs which incorporate many of the elements suggested in the Diocesan Vision, the following are offered for your consideration. Remember, no program is perfect so one should expect to supplement as needed at the parish level. **\*See review below**

- 1) Chosen
- 2) Lifeteen
- 3) YDisciple
- 4) Dead Theologian Society

# Suggested Programs - Reviewed

## 1) Chosen ([www.ascensionpress.com](http://www.ascensionpress.com))

Chosen is designed to offer teens a life-changing experience as they journey through their Catholic faith in all its richness and vitality. The goal is nothing short of winning over the hearts of teens and making them lifelong disciples of Christ.

The Chosen program comes with two sets of DVD's covering 24 topics about the Catholic Faith. Workbooks can be ordered, as well as leader's guides, to help facilitate discussion between content segments. Overall, the program is structured for a small group discussion lasting approximately an hour and a half.

**Costs:** DVD Set \$199.95, Student Workbook: \$19.95, Leader's Guide: \$34.95, Starter Pack: (1 of each) \$249.95. \*Can review the program risk-free before purchasing.

### Pros:

1. Updated, current program. (2014)
2. Some of the top youth experts in the country as presenters (\*main bulk of content is discussed by professionals in the field.)
3. Methodology is based on pre-evangelization, evangelization, catechesis, and discipleship.
4. Easy to implement with leader's guides and workbooks, DVD series of 24 topics to help teens have a better understanding of the Catholic faith.
5. Free resources for Retreats, Penance Services, etc.
6. Small group discussion based.

### Cons:

1. Only movies and workbooks for content; would need to figure out how to incorporate personal testimony/witness.
2. Structured with workbooks which are optional to buy. Workbooks can make it feel more "school based" rather than youth group. Would need to make up own discussion based off of DVD's if desired.
3. Must buy program in order to get resources.
4. Need a team of people who feel comfortable and are capable of leading small groups and supporting the material discussed.

## 2) Life Teen ([www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com))

*Life Teen* is a Eucharist-centered program for youth ministry that seeks engage teens through a "Core Team" of devoted youth ministers. It is a comprehensive youth ministry program that seeks to provide nearly everything a youth minister would need, including the necessary training as well as access to a "Parish Outreach Team" that will assist youth ministers in implementing *Life Teen* in a parish.

*Life Teen* has distinct programs for middle school (Edge), grades 9-12 (Life Support), and college students (College Life). Subscribing to *Life Teen* provides access to many dynamic resources, both digital (web and social media) and in print. *Life Teen's* resources include curriculum guides which contain teachings, small group discussion questions, prayer experiences, ice-breaker ideas, and even pointers on creating the right atmosphere for the teen gatherings.

With certain subscriptions, parishes receive three mailings per year that contain video and written catechist training elements, CDs of the latest music from Christian musicians, DVDs to enhance the social nights that are part of *Life Teen's* program of catechesis, full outlines for the social nights, "hot topic" issue nights, and even annual retreats for teens and Core Teams.

**Costs:** Standard Edge Support, \$600/year (Online-Access Only: \$500/year); Basic Life Support, \$300/year (No online access); Standard Life Support, \$900/year (Online-Access Only: \$700/year); Combo Life Support and Edge Support, \$1400/year (Online-Access Only: \$1200/year); Premium Life Support and Edge Support, \$1800/year; College Life, \$100 Add-On. Please note that "Standard", "Combo" and "Premium" subscriptions include three mailings of materials per year plus access to all online resources and "Basic" subscription provides three mailings with no online access. "Online-Access Only" subscriptions do not include any of the mailings. Complete subscription information can be found at: [www.catholicyouthministry.com/subscribe](http://www.catholicyouthministry.com/subscribe)).

**Pros:**

1. Eucharist centered.
2. Includes training materials for core team of Youth Ministers, and provides access to training.
3. Parishes have access to assistance from a "Parish Outreach Team".
4. Provides nearly all of the resources the core team needs to implement Life Teen.
5. Has a diversity of resources available: DVDs, on-line videos and blogs, print resources for youth ministers, books, etc.
6. Current and up-to-date with regard to culture of teens.

**Cons:**

1. Requires a team of people trained in order to work effectively.
2. Some resources seem to be designed for larger groups of teens.
3. Seems to be resource-heavy.

**3) YDisciple** ([www.ydisciple.org](http://www.ydisciple.org))

*YDisciple* is a small-group (6-8 teens with 2 adults) discussion-based program which incorporates short video "Studies" which focus on topics ranging from respecting life, to chastity, to various theological themes (God, the Church, etc.), as well as activities to further engage the teens and lead them in their relationship with Christ.

*YDisciple* is designed to be used with adult mentors who engage teens in small-group discussion(s). Along with the "platform" that is purchased on-line, training materials are provided which teach adult small-group leaders what the purpose of *YDisciple* is and how it works.

*YDisciple* relies on the pastor choosing the right adults in the parish to lead these discussions, adults who are faithful to Christ and his Church, and also love teens. To be used effectively, *YDisciple* depends on adults' willingness to engage and truly mentor a small group of teenagers.



### **Pros:**

1. Centered on relationships between adults/young adults and teens in the parish.
2. Provides video resources on-line to train and equip adult/young adult mentors (these resources can also be downloaded once the platform is purchased.)
3. Speakers are well-known in Youth Ministry and relate well to teens.
4. Short discussion videos can also be downloaded once the platform is purchased.
5. Print resources available for parents to continue discussions at home.

### **Cons:**

1. Could be difficult in some parishes to find willing adults/young adults.
2. Requires adults/young adults to be committed to regularly meeting with a group of teens so that they can get to know them over a period of time (Not necessarily a “con”, but needs to be kept in mind.)
3. Requires people who are comfortable enough in their faith to share it, to lead these discussions and to mentor the teens, as well as field any questions they may have (Again, not necessarily a “con”).

## **4) Dead Theologians Society      ([www.deadtheologianssociety.com](http://www.deadtheologianssociety.com))**

### **What is the Dead Theologians Society?**

The Dead Theologians Society is a Catholic apostolate for high school age teens and college age young adults. Through the Saints of yesterday, the Dead Theologians Society inspires the youth of today to become the saints of tomorrow. This is done through reading the lives of the saints as well as incorporating traditional Catholic prayers, devotionals, and sacramentals.

### **Costs and Requirements**

1. Adult leadership (a parish priest or deacon; youth minister; DRE or assistant youth minister.)
2. \$500.00 start-up fee (for 7 members), which includes:
  - a. The rights to use the name and the logo of the Dead Theologians Society for one year.
  - b. The DTS Manual complete with prayers, which explains how to set up and run a DTS meeting from A to Z. Manual also comes with a resource list.
  - c. Access to Chapter Support Services which include downloadable Saints teachings, links to Saints teachings, apologetic questions and answers, and more.
  - d. Seven official DTS hoodies with embroidered DTS logo.
  - e. Seven olive wood rosaries made in Bethlehem exclusively for the Dead Theologians Society.
  - f. Seven wool Brown Scapulars of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
  - g. Full color posters to promote your DTS chapter.
  - h. DTS DVD that can be used to effectively promote DTS within the parish community.
3. \$250.00 annual renewal fee.
4. \$37.00 for additional members.

### **Pros**

1. It captures the interest of youth to learn more about the Catholic Faith.
2. It fosters a deeper engagement in the Faith, especially through prayer and participation in the sacraments.
3. It encourages service to the parish and the community.
4. It is not only compatible with, but a particular example of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Youth Ministry model.

### **Cons**

1. It is scheduled for regular meetings (once or twice a month) and therefore would have to become an integral part of the youth group.
2. It requires some events to be scheduled with a priest or deacon (e.g.: Eucharistic Adoration.)

# Resources

In addition to the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, there are a number of good resources available to parishes of which some are listed below. If you would like to recommend a good resource, please contact the Office of Youth Ministry so the resource can be shared with others. (\*note: descriptions taken from resource's advertisement.)

## Websites with Purchasable Programs:

### 1) **Dynamic Catholic** – ([www.dynamiccatholic.com](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com))

The Dynamic Catholic Institute believes that millions of ordinary Catholics want to be involved in a movement that provides a game-changing strategy for the Church today.

### 2) **Chosen** (Catholic Faith Formation for Teens) – ([www.confirmationstudy.com](http://www.confirmationstudy.com))

Chosen is designed to offer teens a life-changing experience as they journey through their Catholic faith in all its richness and vitality; the goal is nothing short of winning over the hearts of teens and making them lifelong disciples of Christ.

### 3) **Dead Theologians Society** – ([www.deadtheologianssociety.com](http://www.deadtheologianssociety.com))

The Dead Theologians Society is a Catholic apostolate for high school age teens and college age young adults. Through the Saints of yesterday, the Dead Theologians Society inspires the youth of today to become the saints of tomorrow.

### 4) **Lifeteen** – ([www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com))

As a Eucharist-centered movement within the Roman Catholic Church, Life Teen leads teenagers and their families into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. With the Blessed Virgin Mary as our intercessor and guide, Life Teen seeks to unleash the fullness of the Sacramental power present within the young Church. (Access to Catholic blogs and articles)

### 5) **Symbolon** – ([www.symboloncatholic.org](http://www.symboloncatholic.org)) \*Useful for training adult leaders.

The Catholic Faith Explained opens up the “big picture” of the Catholic faith in a way that helps us know it, live it and articulate it to others. Through beautifully crafted teaching and state-of-the-art video, author, speaker and theologian - Dr. Edward Sri leads a team of dynamic teachers who provide a clear and comprehensive explanation of the Catholic faith. Filmed on location in Rome, the Holy Land, Calcutta and in the Augustine Institute studios in Denver.

### 6) **Theology of the Body** - ([www.thetheologyofthebody.com](http://www.thetheologyofthebody.com))

Theology of the Body for Teens: High School Edition is a program for Catholic teenagers based on John Paul II's Theology of the Body that helps them understand the meaning of their bodies, the significance of their sexuality, the purpose of their lives, and how they were uniquely created for greatness.

### 7) **YDisciple from the Augustine Institute** – ([www.YDisciple.org](http://www.YDisciple.org))

YDisciple provides an ideal environment for teenagers to come to know and love their faith. Discipleship is not a program – it is an apprenticeship in the Christian life.

## **Websites with Supplemental Materials**

### **1) Catholic Committee on Scouting – ([www.rcdony.org/scouting](http://www.rcdony.org/scouting))**

The purpose of the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is to give guidance, vitality, and leadership in the spiritual phase of Scouting to all Catholic Scouts and Scouters of the Diocese. The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting (DCCS) also endeavors to help parishes and other Catholic organizations support the Scouting program on the local level. \*See the Diocesan web page on Scouting for a link to *The Guide to Catholic Scouting in the Diocese of Ogdensburg*.

The agenda of the DCCS supplements the programs of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), with special instructions and activities, that includes an Annual Retreat and Bishop's Scout Gathering Mass for the presentation of youth and adult religious emblems, awards, and most of all to aid in the physical, ethical, and spiritual development of Scouting members as it relates to Roman Catholics.

For information on the various awards and programs, and for diocesan program information to order books & awards contact Cory Haynes at 518-856-9656 ([clhaynes14@gmail.com](mailto:clhaynes14@gmail.com)) or Fr. Bryan Stitt, Chaplain of Catholic Scouting at 315-393-2920, ext. 1450 ([bstitt@rcdony.org](mailto:bstitt@rcdony.org)).

### **2) Catholic Youth Foundation, USA- ([www.cyfusa.org](http://www.cyfusa.org))**

Catholic Youth Foundation USA serves the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry by providing financial resources at the local, diocesan, regional, and national levels to promote effective and innovative youth ministry to assure a faithful future.

### **3) The Chastity Project – ([www.chastityproject.com](http://www.chastityproject.com))**

Chastity Project is a ministry of Jason and Crystalina Evert that promotes the virtue of chastity through seminars, resources, clubs, and social media. (There are MANY resources on this website, as well as links to other ministries: The Cor Project by Christopher West, Emotional Virtue by Sarah Swafford, Women Made New by Crystalina Evert, Real Life Catholic by Chris Stefanick and The Porn Effect by Matt Fradd)

### **4) Center for Ministry Development – ([www.cmdnet.org](http://www.cmdnet.org))**

The Center for Ministry Development provides training, resources and consultation for pastoral ministry and catechesis with youth, young adults, families, and the intergenerational community.

### **5) Cornerstone Media, Inc. – ([www.cornerstonemedia.org](http://www.cornerstonemedia.org))**

Produces both print and audio materials to help parents, teachers, youth ministers, pastors, and others who work with teens.

### **6) National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers – ([www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org))**

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry participates in the mission of the Catholic Church by advocating for and supporting Catholic youth ministry on the national, diocesan, and local level.

### **7) Real Life Catholics – ([www.reallifecatholic.com](http://www.reallifecatholic.com))**

Real Life Catholic brings teens, college students, and parents to new life by proclaiming the best news in human history in a way that's clear, relevant, and life giving.

### **8) Saint Mary's Press – ([www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org))**

Saint Mary's Press is a nonprofit, Lasallian Catholic publisher administered by the Christian Brothers of the Midwest District. Saint Mary's Press is a contemporary expression of the Catholic Church's mission to proclaim

the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Lasallian mission to provide a human and Christian education for young people, including those who are economically deprived.

**9) Steubenville Youth Conferences – ([www.steubenville.org](http://www.steubenville.org))**

The mission of the Steubenville Conferences is to invite young people into a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ through the Sacraments of the Church and the power of the Holy Spirit. This experience of Christ's love opens their hearts to become His disciples and embrace the mission of the Catholic Church. (There is also free access to any past talks from previous conferences for youth and young adults.)

**In Conclusion:** This Diocesan Vision for Youth Ministry is intended to guide efforts at the parish level in providing young people age-appropriate opportunities which will lead them to a life-changing encounter with Christ and nourish a faithful, fruitful and joyful friendship with Him and His Church. The working committee, comprised of clergy and youth ministry leaders from across the diocese, prayerfully researched, considered and discussed each element of the Vision and is confident it fulfills the stated intention.

Through the inspired efforts of local pastors and collaborating core teams and individuals, it is believed that our ministry to the youth will flourish in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. May God bless all of our endeavors for our youth so that they may find in Christ constant renewal in faith, joy in hope and discover in Him the love which never fails.

Vision approved by Bishop LaValley: April 2015

**Title:** Coordinator of Youth Ministry

**Reports to:** Pastor

**General Description**

Responsible for developing parish based pastoral ministry with youth. Reaches out to all youth in the community, provides for formal catechesis, invites, and enables youth to serve others. Develops close communication with and mutual support from families of youth and collaborates with other community and parish youth organizations.

**Job Responsibilities**

**A. Program Development**

- Creates and develops core group and provides for its enrichment
- Develops leadership skills in youth and young adults
- Develops a network for reaching out to youth, particularly the alienated
- Is available for and has set times for listening, advising and referral
- Plans, coordinates and implements weekend retreats and evenings of prayer reflection
- Develops the kind of relationship with parents that are conducive to open communication between parents and youth
- Assists in the preparation of liturgical celebrations for youth

**B. Recruitment and Training of Leaders**

- Recruits, trains, assigns, and evaluates the youth leaders. Coordinates participation in diocesan-sponsored training programs
- Serves as an advisor and support to youth leaders
- Monitors the efforts of volunteer leaders and evaluates progress
- Makes special efforts to gain the endorsement, support, and involvement of all adults, especially parents and parish organizations
- Defines the responsibilities of each adult leader/advisor
- Publicizes and offers education programs and support systems for volunteer leaders

**C. Administration**

- Initiates ways of gathering data on the needs, interests, gifts, attitudes and benefits of youth and young adults
- Plans, organizes, and implements programs/experiences that provide a holistic approach in meeting the needs/interest of youth and young adults
- Submits annual financial report and budget; administers budget throughout the year
- Maintains necessary office and program records, including a log of activities and times
- Determines effective means for publicizing and promoting programs and experiences
- Submits periodic reports to the pastor/supervisor detailing programs in youth ministry
- Initiates procedures for evaluating all aspects of the parish's ministry to youth

#### **D. Communication**

- Keeps the parish faith community informed of youth ministry activities and goals
- Advises, communicates and cooperates with other parish and diocesan organizations
- Works with youth ministry team on goals and programmatic ideas for meeting needs
- Participates in parish governing structures to insure greater participation of youth in parish life and to facilitate communication and decision-making
- Supervises and coordinates scheduling of youth events and activities
- Keeps informed through attendance at diocesan, regional, and national conferences, regular reading, and membership in professional organizations
- Is aware of community agencies and resources that interface with youth
- Sets annual goals and objectives for each Junior/Senior High program as requested

#### **E. Necessary Qualifications**

- Active member of a Roman Catholic parish faith community
- Bachelor's degree in a related field
- Youth ministry experience in a Catholic parish
- Knowledge of *Renewing the Vision* – U.S. Bishop's document for building a framework for successful youth ministry
- Youth Minister is expected to obtain Diocese of Ogdensburg Youth Ministry Certification in a timely fashion upon hire.

**Youth Ministry Coordinator Job Description**

**1. General Responsibilities**

Youth Ministry (YM) provides vision and coordination for the parish's efforts in ministry to young people from 6th through 12th grades. This includes high school and middle school sessions (weekly or bi-weekly gatherings), monthly activities, catechesis and sacramental preparation (confirmation).

**2. Accountability**

The coordinator is a member of the parish staff who reports directly to the pastor.

**3. Responsibilities**

Parish staff member--the CYM will be responsible to:

- Attend regular staff meetings
- Participate in staff planning
- Communicate to staff about youth ministry activities
- Seek staff input in planning youth ministry activities
- Be a resource person to parish staff on issues related to youth and youth ministry
- Serve as the liaison with the pastor, parish staff and the parish council
- Youth Minister is expected to obtain Diocese of Ogdensburg Youth Ministry Certification in a timely fashion upon hire.

Parish Youth Ministry--the parish youth ministry program integrates adolescent catechesis into a comprehensive ministry to, with, by and for young people. The CYM's responsibilities include:

- Facilitating the Youth Leadership Team, which is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive youth ministry program
- Serving on the Youth Ministry Commission, which is an oversight group providing vision, direction, support, and advocacy for the parish ministry with youth
- Coordinating the recruitment, training, supporting, and evaluating of volunteers in the youth ministry program
- Developing a systematic and intentional plan for adolescent catechesis that utilizes a creative variety of formats, settings, and time frames
- Providing resources (print, video, archdiocesan events) for effective programming
- Providing appropriate training for the adults and young people in leadership positions
- Coordinating the Confirmation program
- Fostering the involvement of young people in the life of the parish, including serving on various parish committees and being involved in parish activities
- Coordinating the outreach to and evangelization of all young people in the parish
- Providing appropriate services and programs for parents of adolescents
- Advocating for a comprehensive vision of youth ministry, based on the 1997 USCCB document, *Renewing The Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*
- Serving as the liaison with the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry and its programs, services and resources
- Participating in the diocesan association of professional youth ministers and in any local youth ministers association

#### **4. Relationships**

- Pastor—immediate supervisor
- Parish Staff—close cooperation and communication and seek staff involvement and input when appropriate
- Parish Council—attend regular meetings and provide a youth ministry report
- Parish Committees—communicate and collaborate with appropriate committees, i.e., liturgy, social justice, religious education, etc.
- Youth Ministry Commission—close support and involvement
- Parents and Parishioners—regular communication and seek input as appropriate
- Diocesan Offices—regular communications, adherence to diocesan policies, participation in diocesan professional organizations, diocesan association of professional youth ministers



**POSITION TITLE:** Coordinator of Youth Ministry

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**LOCATION:** Parish Name

**EMPLOYEE:** Employee Name

**REPORTS TO:** Pastor

**DEPARTMENT:** Youth Ministry

**DATE UPDATED:** Last date reviewed

**FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME:** Full-time

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**POSITION SUMMARY:**

The coordinator of youth ministry (CYM) provides vision and coordination for the parish's efforts in ministry to young people from 6th through 12th grades. This includes high school and middle school sessions (weekly or bi-weekly gatherings), monthly activities, catechesis and sacramental preparation (confirmation).

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

**(other duties may be assigned)**

Parish staff member--the CYM will be responsible to:

- Attend regular staff meetings
- Participate in staff planning
- Communicate to staff about youth ministry activities
- Seek staff input in planning youth ministry activities
- Be a resource person to parish staff on issues related to youth and youth ministry
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- Coordinating the recruitment, training, supporting, and evaluating of volunteers in the youth ministry program
- Developing a systematic and intentional plan for adolescent catechesis that utilizes a creative variety of formats, settings, and time frames
- Providing resources (print, video, web, diocesan events) for effective programming
- Providing appropriate training for the adults and young people in leadership positions
- Coordinating the confirmation program
- Fostering the involvement of young people in the life of the parish, including serving on various parish committees and being involved in parish activities
- Coordinating the outreach to and evangelization of all young people in the parish
- Providing appropriate services and programs for parents of adolescents
- Advocating for a comprehensive vision of youth ministry, based on the 1997 USCCB document, *Renewing The Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*
- Serving as the liaison with the diocesan office of youth ministry and their programs, services and resources

**OTHER OR SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Collaborate with the Liturgy Committee in the implementation and development of the youth liturgy (contemporary liturgy)
- Collaborates with other staff in planning common projects

**THIS POSITION SUPERVISES:**

The Administrative Assistant for Youth Ministry

**QUALIFICATIONS TO PERFORM THE JOB SUCCESSFULLY:** To perform this job successfully, an Individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, ability or physical demands required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.

**Education and/or Experience:**

B.A. in Theology, Pastoral Ministry, or related field, knowledge of Catholic teachings, catechesis and documents on youth ministry.

**Language Skills:**

Strong verbal and written communication skills; proficiency in composing reports, correspondence and letters and in publishing e-newsletters and flyers in English, ability to develop and facilitate youth programs and confirmation sessions; ability to read and understand church documents and guidelines.

**Computational Skills:**

Ability to read, prepare, and manage budgets for major events and programs; prepare annual budget for youth ministry.

**Reasoning Ability:**

Ability to solve problems, make sound decisions, and deal with a variety of concrete variables.

**Technical Skills:**

Proficiency in Word, Excel, and Microsoft Office

**Certificates, Licenses, Registrations:**

Youth Minister is expected to obtain Diocese of Ogdensburg Youth Ministry Certification in a timely fashion upon hire.

**Physical Demands:**

While performing the duties of this job, the employee must be able to transport materials and equipment (up to 30 pounds) to and from various locations. The employee is regularly required to sit for extended periods of time, use hands in repetitive motion tasks, handle objects, talk and hear. Specific vision abilities required include close vision, depth perception and ability to adjust focus.

**Physical Environment:**

The employee will work in an individual office with a door. The offices are situated next to one another. The noise level is usually quiet. The space is wheelchair accessible. The employee will also work at off-site locations for various ministry events, like retreat centers, supervising and directing those events.

**Working Conditions:**

The employee is required to be physically present in the office in order to complete office task, be available to work outside of regular business hours as required and check in with and provide calendar to administrative assistant. The employee must be able to work cooperatively with other members of the staff and with youth leaders and volunteers. The employee must be able to multitask.

**Other Requirements:**

The employee must have knowledge of Church structure and culture. The employee must have knowledge of current youth culture and current trends and issues within those cultures. Requires the ability to maintain confidentiality.

**Supervisors and employees should review this position description at the time of hire and at each evaluation conference. Employees should sign and date below. Please give copy to employee and return original to Personnel Office.**

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**Employee**

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**Date**

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**Supervisor**

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**Date**

# **Diocese of Ogdensburg, Youth Minister Certification**

The Diocesan Vision for Parish Youth Ministry states: ***The Goal of Diocesan and Parish Youth Ministry is to provide age appropriate opportunities which will lead our youth to a life changing encounter with Christ which will nourish a faithful, fruitful and joyful friendship with him and his Church.*** To that end, choosing the right person(s) to be engaged in youth ministry is essential.

The Vision goes on to advise: *the parish should recruit like-minded people to function as a core youth ministry team. Time spent vetting key adults and older teens is time well spent. Team members should be chosen for their manner of life, their knowledge of the faith, their love of Christ, an ability to witness to that love in their life and a genuine ability to relate to young people.*

Among those leading youth ministry on the parish level, it is essential they possess a certain level of knowledge of the Faith and understanding of and working with youth. To assist youth ministers in gaining that knowledge and experience, the diocese has established the Youth Minister Certification Program.

**Who should pursue YM Certification?** Any parish employee responsible for leading youth ministry efforts, part or full time, should be certified. Similarly, any volunteer responsible for leading youth ministry is encouraged to complete the Certification Program, but should at least attain a Youth Ministry Certificate of Recognition. Parish Religious Education Coordinators and related personnel should also attain Youth Ministry Certification. Those hired for a Youth Minister Position are expected to complete their Certification Requirements as courses become available.

## **Requirements for YM Certification:**

1. Be at least eighteen years of age.
2. Completion of Diocesan *Virtus* program and background check.
3. Completion of Diocesan Growth in Faith, Catechist Certification (51 Hours)
4. Completion of Youth Ministry Track of Formation for Ministry Program. (8 courses = 10 Hours)

Candidates for YM Certification are encouraged to discuss with the appropriate Diocesan Department head to determine if prior education or life experience qualifies for credit for particular courses. The Director of Diocesan Faith Formation is responsible to determine this for the Catechist Certification Program and the Director of the Office of Youth Ministry for the Youth Ministry Track.

**Certificate of Recognition:** Those completing the eight required courses for the Youth Ministry Track will receive a "Youth Ministry Certificate of Recognition."

## **Ongoing requirements for certification:**

Once certified, the youth minister is required to participate annually in the diocesan youth ministry network and complete 3 hours in pre-approved courses or programs or youth ministry events such as:

1. Diocesan Youth Rally or regional youth events.
2. National March for Life.
3. Diocesan youth ministry retreats or conferences.
4. Youth ministry programs or courses offered by recognized Catholic youth ministry education providers.

# Youth Ministry Track Courses

- Course 1:** Overview of Current USCCB Document on Youth
- Course 2:** Evangelizing Youth in Today's Culture: Include the social media culture and demographics of the Diocese.
- Course 3:** Communicating With Youth & Parents: Includes electronic media issues, concerns and best practices.
- Course 4:** Discussing Faith and Morals with Youth in a Secular Culture
- Course 5:** The Youth Minister as Model of Mission and Apologetics
- Course 6:** The Youth Minister as Model of Prayer and Worship: Teaching youth to be leaders at prayer.
- Course 7:** Best Practices for Youth Ministry: Includes planning youth ministry events, public relations, recruitment of youth and recruitment and training volunteers.
- Course 8:** Staying Current, Connected and Energized! Includes ongoing formation, continuing education, regional networking, and collaboration with other parishes in the region.