

THE NEED FOR CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

In 1997 the Catholic Bishops of the United States created the document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. A wake-up call to the Church, this important youth ministry document spelled out clearly the need for Catholic youth ministry in the Church today.

“What is needed today is a church, which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body, which is the church, to propose the possibility of a choice, which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the church must become the traveling companion of young people...”

- Pope St. John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995, Philippines

With then Pope John Paul II words echoing in the ears of the young Church and the United States Bishops, *Renewing the Vision* built a strong framework of goals for ministry with adolescents.

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

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

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

To accomplish these goals, the entire Catholic community must unite to minister to and empower the young Church to be Disciples of Christ. Life Teen recognizes the need for “relational” ministry and “catechetical” resources; we recognize the need for comprehensive Catholic youth ministry beginning in middle school and advancing to high school.

8 COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Life Teen is comprehensive youth ministry! Leading teens closer to Christ, connecting them to the life of the entire parish and infusing the surrounding community with the light of Christ is central to Life Teens mission and movement. We are called to “go forth and love and serve the Lord and one another.” This is accomplished through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and *Renewing the Vision’s* 8 Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry.

THE MINISTRY OF ADVOCACY

“The ministry of advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission and work of the Catholic community.”

- *Renewing the Vision* p. 27

Life Teen recognizes that advocacy is more than being a voice for the teens of your parish. Advocacy is being a voice for the voiceless: the unborn, elderly, children, poor and many more. Advocacy raises teens’ awareness on issues that often go unnoticed, allowing them to be a voice and witness the Gospel in the world today.

THE MINISTRY OF CATECHESIS

“The ministry of catechesis helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community, and increase their knowledge of the core content of the Catholic faith.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 29

Reaching teens where they are at developmentally, spiritually and physically is what makes Life Teen effective. Based on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) doctrinal guidelines for high school catechesis, our Life Teen Curriculum Guides provide a 4-year catechetical structure that can be used in building an engaging and educational semester for your teens.

THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

“The Ministry of Community Life builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures Catholic faith.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 34

“Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) Community is where relational ministry becomes a reality. Through both gathered and non-gathered activities, relationships are developed at Life Nights, Starbucks, sports fields, pews and retreats. Bringing teens into the entire parish life is accomplished when adults and peers are engaged in the life of teens, both at Church and in their everyday lives.

THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELIZATION

“Evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person of faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God.”

-Go and Make Disciples p. 2

Evangelization and Catechesis are two primary tasks of the Church and of a successful youth ministry program. Life Teen seeks to lead teens in a real relationship with Christ and build the foundation for lifelong discipleship. Evangelization “reaches out to young people by meeting them in their various life situations and building relationships.” It “invites young people personally into the life and mission of the Catholic community” and “calls young people to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” Finally, evangelization “calls young people to be evangelizers of other young people, their families, and the community.” (Renewing The Vision p. 37)

THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND SERVICE

“The Ministry of Justice and Service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 38

Life Teen approaches Justice and Service one person at a time. As Blessed Mother of Teresa humbly reminds us, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” As the movement of Life Teen continues to strive forward, a missionary Spirit is leading the way through Life Teen Missions in the United States and Internationally. Global Life Nights and service projects unite the entire Life Teen

family annually to serve the poor and witness the Gospel in every neighborhood. Each Life Teen parish is encouraged to offer ample opportunities for the teens to be involved in works of service and charity.

THE MINISTRY OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 40

Through a spirit of servant leadership, Life Teen empowers, affirms and calls teens to live as humble disciples. Adults are called to serve teens and their community as Core Members, Parent Life ministers, chaperones and liturgical coordinators. Teens are encouraged to witness and serve their peers as Edge Core (for middle school youth ministry program), liturgical ministers and peer leaders. Our summer Life Teen Leadership Conference for high school junior and seniors is one of our most popular annual events.

THE MINISTRY OF PASTORAL CARE

“The Ministry of Pastoral Care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care for people, especially those who were hurting and in need.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 42

Pastoral Care is more than “teen counseling”. It is a ministry of discernment and humility to recognize our limitedness and seek the help teens need for true healing to take place. Creating networks and connections for teens and their families during crisis situations is an important tool for youth ministers. Our training for Core and youth ministers incorporates aspects of pastoral care for teens.

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

“The Ministry of Prayer and Worship celebrates and deepens young people’s relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the Spirit at work in their lives, it incorporates young people more fully in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people, and it fosters family rituals and prayer.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 44

Life Teen is centered on the Eucharist and the celebration of a youth focused liturgy is what makes Life Teen unique and transformational. Our mission of leading teens closer to Christ starts at Mass. Weekly programming such as Life Nights, Edge Nights, Bible studies, and XLT Adoration experiences flow out of our Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

Life Teen is a complete, comprehensive and interactive model of religious formation. Grounded in the sacraments, middle school and high school teens are introduced to dynamic catechesis that removes the classroom desks and draws them into an interactive learning experience.

