

 CENTER for
 MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Connecting Young Adults with the Faith Community

LA Religious Education Congress
 March 21, 2010


Slides

If you would like the PowerPoint slides, please go to www.cmdnet.org, click on the Young Adult Ministry icon, and you will find the slides posted on the page which comes up.

Build Bridges to Connect Young Adults...


- with Jesus;
- with the Church;
- with the Church's mission to transform the world;
- with peers who share their values and beliefs.

(Sons and Daughters of the Light; USCCB)



Go Where Young Adults Are

- Where are they?
 - Online/facebook/twitter/podcasts/blogs
 - The gym, the bar, the sports event, the cyber-café, the workplace, colleges, military bases
 - Where else?
- Have faith presence at places young adults go
 - Help involved young adults understand Catholic evangelization (no hidden agenda)



Conversation as Bridge



Opportunities

- What conversations have you had with young adults?
- What conversations have you missed? Why?

When They Come to Us

- Welcome young adults as Christ welcomes with “understanding, love, and acceptance, challenging them with the gospel message, and giving them hope...” *NDC 48*
- Note the *order!*



When They Come to Us

- Jesus’ strategy
 - Take care of their human needs first
 - Love (unconditional), then challenge
- Does your faith community do this?



Ready When They Come to Us

- Sunday/Special Liturgies
 - Easter, Christmas, Weddings, Funerals, Anniversaries, Ash Wednesday
- Sacramental Preparation
- Sports
- Spiritual activities



Ready with...

- A warm, unconditional welcome
- Opportunities for socializing, recreation/non-competitive sports
- Opportunities for spiritual growth, such as...
 - Adoration
 - Taize prayer experiences
 - Reality show with a faith twist
 - Bible study



The Word and Young Adults

Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church:

- “Surely, the most important matters in the Bible are those most directly linked to daily life, as was the case with Jesus.” (Synod, 22)



The Word and Young Adults



In the prophetic style of Jesus of Nazareth, the proclamation of the Word of God “ought to appear to each person as a solution to his problems, an answer to his questioning, a widening of his values and an overall fulfillment to his aspirations.” (Synod, 51)

The Word and Young Adults

- One-time topical sessions (e.g., Rejection and Jesus' Passion; Forgiveness and Jesus on the Cross)
- Justice connections (Death Penalty and Sermon on the Mount)
- Ongoing Bible study
- Lectionary-based Bible study in small groups
- Bible Jeopardy



Challenges

What do you think parish leaders identified as the biggest challenges to being more young adult responsive faith communities?

Challenges

- No one in charge of ministry with young adults
 - When it's everyone's responsibility, it sometimes becomes no one's responsibility
 - When it's added to a full-time position, it's hard to get the time or energy to accomplish anything

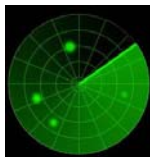
Challenges

- Wide range of ages, stages, needs between 18 and 39



- Thinking young adult ministry is just Youth Ministry 200; "group" mentality

- Not understanding postmodern culture
- Young adults sometimes "invisible"—not on Church's radar screen between sacramental moments



How Ready Are You?

- How does your parish handle the challenges?
- Have you been intentional about welcoming young adults when they do come?
- What would you like to do *right now* to be a more welcoming faith community for young couples and singles?

Before You Invite Them To Your Parish...



Assess Your Parish: How Young Adult Responsive Are You?

- Community life
- Catechesis
- Evangelization
- Justice and Service
- Liturgy and Sacraments
- Leadership
- Prayer and Spirituality



Choice of Action

- Do comprehensive young adult ministry
- Do one or two programs specifically for young adults
- Take what you are already doing and make it more young adult friendly
 - Marketing
 - Method
 - Content



Faith Formation

- *NDC 48*: Young adults need a “non-threatening place where they can freely express their questions, doubts, and even disagreements with the Church and where the teachings of the Church can be clearly articulated and related to their experience...”

Faith Formation

- Adult faith formation
- RCIA sponsors
- Intergenerational faith formation
- Catechetical programs specifically for young adults
- Retreats—think outside the box
- Life topic programs for young adults with catechesis woven in



Methodology—Faith & Life

1. Ask what young adults *want* to learn.
2. Find someone with the skills to teach this.
3. Emphasize hospitality—get people connecting with each other.
4. Ask questions which lead to deeper questions—but don't rush it.

Methodology—Faith & Life

5. Imbed catechesis naturally.
6. Include simple rituals.
7. Give participants something to take home—on the topic and on faith.
8. Don't force communion. Let the Spirit work.



Non-Gathered Faith Formation

- Post catechetical “soundbytes” on your website
- Pose Question of the Week
 - On keychain
 - On rear-view mirror or visor
- Start a blog/Recommend a blog
 - Keep the Feast www.keepthefeast.blogspot.com
 - Catholic Young Adults & Social Justice www.sojuya.net
 - Busted Halo www.bustedhalo.com/bustedblog



Recommend Websites

- www.bc.edu/church21/studentcorner/agapelatte.html
- www.bustedhalo.com
- www.sacredspace.ie
- www.usccb.org

Young Adult Faith Formation

- What is your parish doing to support the faith formation of your young adults?
- What could you be doing?

Engage in Justice

- Source of inspiration, metanoia
- Direct service—with theological reflection



Engage in Justice

- Lifestyle challenges and changes



Engage in Justice

- Advocacy: voices for the voiceless (satisfies the yearning for a cause)
 - Teach advocacy skills to young adults
 - Engage them with Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching
- Mentoring youth

Gifts Discernment—A Win-Win

- Teach theological reflection on life issues
- Offer workshops or retreats on discernment:
 - Gifts discernment
 - Vocation discernment
 - Panel of committed people from every vocational group
 - Evenings on "Should We Get Engaged?"
 - Career discernment



From Gifts to Leadership

- Invite young adults into leadership
 - In parish leadership—Pastoral Council, Finance Committee
 - In parish life—Liturgy Committee, Liturgical Ministries, Justice, Pastoral Care
 - In young adult ministry
 - In youth ministry (but not the 19-year-olds)

Ritualize Life Transitions/Milestones

- Be intentional about faith presence at significant life moments
 - Celebrate the peaks
 - Walk with them in the valleys
 - Make the faith-life connection
- Create/share rituals



Resources

- *Sons and Daughters of the Light* (USCCB)
- *Connecting Young Adults with Catholic Parishes—Best Practices in Catholic Young Adult Ministry* (USCCB, 2010)



Contact Information

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- www.cmdnet.org (pdf of slides)

Thanks for coming!
God bless your ministry with young adults.