

Leadership Development

We have probably all heard the comment, “the youth are not just the Church of tomorrow – they are the Church of today!” It has become one of those phrases that are used to inspire young people into action in the Church. The fact is that it is up to adults (and us as Coordinators of Youth Ministry) to help make that statement true. If we are not advocating for young people (see chapter 2), then they are lost in the Church today, and if we are not teaching them to be leaders, then they will be lost in the Church of tomorrow.

The ministry of leadership development is meant to help young people to recognize their God-given gifts and talents and to educate them on how to use them to glorify God. While it is true that some people are natural-born leaders, most people become good leaders through education and coaching. **The pages in this chapter are just a brief overview of the types of skills that can be taught to young people to help them to become stronger leaders.**

Furthermore, if we want to build strong Christian leaders, then we need to start with strong Christians. Certainly this is omitted from most leadership training and resources in the secular world. Unfortunately, it is often not a large component of leadership development in Catholic circles either. Young people need to develop a deep faith in Christ, an ability to communicate that faith with others, and a solid understanding of the Church and the truths that She teaches. This is imperative if young people hope to lead the Church today OR tomorrow, and reiterate the need for strong Catechesis (chapter 3). **This chapter contains a chart which shows how Jesus demonstrated leadership qualities.**

Many of the skills which are discussed in this chapter are skills which we also need to develop to become more effective at leading other adults. Information is provided about the **Catholic Leadership Institute** which offers leadership training to Coordinators of Youth Ministry or their entire youth ministry team.

This chapter contains the following:

1. **Brief overview of leadership skills**
2. **Jesus as Leader** by Fr. Jack Peterson
3. **Jesus as a Leader** (Scripture Table Chart)
4. **Leadership Qualities, Skills and Resources**
5. **Gender Differences: A Worksheet on Leadership Styles** by Mariam MacGregor
6. **Self-Evaluation for Youth Leaders**
7. **10 Steps for Implementing a Youth Leadership Development Program**
8. **Conflict and Resolution**
9. **Reflections of Youth Leadership Boards** by John Campbell
10. **Structuring an Effective Core Team** by Rob Tessier
11. **How to Recruit Strong Volunteers for your Youth Ministry** by Rob Tessier
12. **Effective Practices in Leading Small Faith Communities** by Eric McDade
13. **Temperament and the Spiritual Life** by Art and Laraine Bennett
14. **Catholic Leadership Institute**

Here are several resources which discuss the process of leadership development. Rather than simply repeat the information in these books, I recommend that you purchase one of these resources and use it to build stronger youth leaders.



1. *Total Youth Ministry. Ministry Resources for Youth Leadership Development* by Ann Marie Eckert with Maria Sanchez-Keane, Saint Mary's Press

2. *Foundations of Leadership for Youth Ministry: Leader's Guide.* by John Roberto, Don Bosco Multimedia

To assist you with your own leadership development, I would recommend one of these books:

1. *People Skills.* By Robert Bolton, PhD, Simon and Schuster Inc.
2. *The Leadership Challenge.* By James Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jossey-Bass publishers

Here are some of the topics to cover when training young leaders:

Personality Type

The key to being a good leader is understanding your personality type, and those of the people that you are working with. The Myers Briggs Test or the Kiersey Temperament Sorter consist of hundreds of questions which allow you to determine where your personality lies on four different character trait scales.

1. Extroverted vs. Introverted
2. Sensing vs. Intuitive
3. Thinking vs. Feeling
4. Judging vs. Perceiving

Once you are able to determine your personality, you can learn why you tend to respond the way that you do to other people, and can learn to handle leadership situations differently. This would be an effective exercise to run with your adults volunteers, or a youth leadership board.

Create a Mission statement

Taking the time to create a mission statement for yourself can help you to decide what is most important in your life, and the type of person that you want to be. Just the process of writing a statement is eye-opening. If you had to describe your purpose in life in one sentence, or a brief paragraph, what would you say? Once you have the statement written, you can analyze all of the things in your life which steer you from completing your mission. Leaders must learn to always make decisions based on whether their decision will help them to accomplish their mission, or lead them away from it.

Time Management

This is critical for effective leadership. Leaders require the ability to learn to set priorities in life, to stick to them, and to manage time so that they are able to accomplish the tasks which are most important to them.

Communication Skills

In order for somebody to lead others, they must be effective communicators. An effective communicator understands that:

- 10% of our communication is represented by the words that we say
- 30% is represented by our sounds
- 60% by our body language

An effective communicator is able to show through body language that they are paying attention to the conversation.

There are “roadblocks” to effective communication that effectively shut down a conversation.

1. Judging...”That is really stupid”,
2. Agreeing...”Well, I think you’re pretty.”
3. Ordering...”Don’t ever do that again.”
4. Sending Solutions...”You should do this...”
5. Diverting...”You should just blow the place up.”
6. Giving Logical arguments...”Let’s look at the facts...”
7. Reassuring...”Relax, everything will work out...”

Good listeners are able to show that they are following a conversation and care, without making some of the roadblocks listed above. This is done through “reflective listening” – acting as a mirror to the speaker. When done well, it can lead a person to make their own decisions, and show a deep sense of care.

1. Paraphrase what the person is talking about to show that you are listening
2. Reflect feelings...”so that made you angry?”
3. Reflect meanings...”you were angry because he left you”
4. Provide summaries of what you heard.

Win-Win negotiating

Whenever there is a disagreement between options, a leader is effective at coming up with solutions that make all of the parties feel good about the final decision.

1. Begin by looking at the problem from the other person’s point of view
2. Break the argument down to the key issue(s)
3. Determine what results would produce an acceptable solution for all parties
4. Brainstorm for other options/ deconstruct the problem.

Conflict Resolution

1. Treat the other person with respect
2. Listen until you experience the other side
3. State your views, needs, feelings.

Conflict Resolution = Original differences no longer exist

Conflict Control = Negative consequences left to a minimum

Four Basic Leadership styles

The following four leadership styles are actually a process that begins with directing and finishes with delegating. The process progresses as a follower gains competence in a task and goes from highly committed to a low-level of commitment and back again.

1. **Directing** – The leader defines the roles of the followers and tells them what, how, when, and where to do various tasks. Problem-solving and decision making are initiated solely by the manager. Solutions and decisions are announced; communication is largely one-way, and implementation is closely supervised by the leader.
2. **Coaching** – The leader provides a great deal of direction and leads with his/her ideas, but also attempts to hear followers' feelings about decisions as well as their ideas and suggestions. While two-way communication and support are increased, control over decision making remains with the leader.
3. **Supporting** – The focus of control for day-to-day decision making and problem solving shifts from leader to follower. The leader's role is to provide recognition and to actively listen and facilitate problem-solving/decision-making on the part of the follower.
4. **Delegating** – The leader discusses the problems with the subordinates until joint agreement is achieved on problem definition and then the decision making process is delegated totally to the follower.

The key to developing young leaders:

1. Create Parish leadership positions for young people.
 - look beyond the youth ministry program to find places that young people can serve the church. Different young people will enjoy different types of positions.
2. Invite young people into leadership.
3. Form them, and then get out of the way.

Jesus as Leader

by Fr. Jack Peterson

Jesus is the Light of the World. His light shines brightly upon mankind. One of the brilliant colors that make up the prism of His light is the gift of His leadership. His leadership serves as a model for all Christians, especially for youth ministers. As men and women called to serve young people, our ministry will be effective if we truly strive to imitate Christ. Our efforts to journey alongside a young person will be illuminated by the light of Christ if we incorporate His style of leadership. Let us explore some of the leadership gifts that Jesus demonstrates in the Gospels.

Jesus is Confident

Jesus exhibits a strong and attractive confidence that comes from having a very clear vision for His life. While walking upon this earth, He knows God intimately, and He fully understands God's plan for mankind. In fact, Jesus comes into this world with the purpose of bearing witness to the truth regarding who God is and His plan for His beloved children. Since Jesus dwells in a very unique union with the Father in the Holy Spirit and has a clear vision for His role in Salvation History. He speaks and acts with a confidence that makes Him a very attractive leader. It is a confidence rooted in truth and love, not pride and arrogance. As a result, His followers are amazed at how He speaks with authority and not like many other religious leaders. The crowds are drawn to Jesus because of His humble confidence.

Jesus Shows Care

Furthermore, Jesus cares deeply about individuals. He demonstrates God's enduring and personal love for each person with whom He comes into contact. Through His actions, words, gaze, and gestures people have a profound sense that they are the only person that matters to Jesus during their encounter with Him. This deep, selfless care transforms lives, renews hope, and restores life to the flock. Plenty of examples in the Gospels come to mind, including the woman with the hemorrhages, James and John along the lakeshore, the woman at the well, and Matthew at His tax collector's post. Jesus can look into a person's eyes, reveal His great love for them, heal their brokenness, and call them to a brand new way of life. Jesus' personal care for the individual makes Him a great leader.

Jesus is a Team Builder

As a leader, Jesus knew that He needed a good team for the future. He turned out to be a master team builder! He handpicked a group of twelve that He called, taught, nurtured, coached, journeyed with, and transformed into a group of disciples that served as the foundation of the Church which quickly spread throughout most of the known world. The grand finale of His Paschal mystery, His saving work, was the supreme Gift of the Holy Spirit. The Advocate was the final transforming gift to His disciples. The Holy Spirit, the love of God which came to dwell in the hearts of the disciples, gave them tremendous courage, wisdom, and apostolic zeal to spread the light of Christ to the ends of the earth.

Our Lord sees goodness and talents in people that are often hidden by brokenness, sin, and pride. His gaze penetrates the soul and enables Him to see the gifts that the Father has given to each of us. By healing them with His forgiveness, consistency, and the warmth of His love, He then is able to draw out the leadership skills in others and place His disciples in the right place in His kingdom where they can bear fruit that will last.

Jesus is Prudent

Jesus' leadership is also manifest in the exercise of tremendous prudence in pasturing the flock. He knows when to be gentle, patient, and understanding with His leaders and with the crowds. He also knows when to be firm, challenging, and unbending with the same people. This gift of prudence makes Him a tremendous shepherd of souls. This gift comes from His profound concern to speak the truth with love and to draw people into an ever deeper relationship with God over time that leads them to the fullness of life. Jesus, in the Gospels, leans heavily on the gift of patience, often choosing to hoe for another year around the barren bush. However, He also finds the proper moment to point out sin, poor judgment, and mistaken intentions. For instance, His prudence and courage lead Him to turn over the money changers' tables in the temple area or to tell Simon Peter that he is thinking as Satan does.

Jesus is a Servant

Jesus is a uniquely effective leader because He exercises servant leadership. He spends nearly every waking moment during His three public years serving those around Him, especially those in need. Even when others would push people away, Jesus invites them to His side, extends His love, His healing, His wisdom, and a loaf of bread. When the twelve are distracted by their own ambitions and debate among themselves which is the greatest among them, Jesus turns their silliness into a teaching moment and explains the importance of being a servant. Greatness in His kingdom is measured by our willingness to humble ourselves and serve the needs of our neighbor. The washing of the feet of the Apostles on Holy Thursday is a shocking, prime example, eclipsed only by the next day when He lays down His life for the flock on the cross. Jesus is a great leader because He truly cares more about others than about His own comfort or need. This style of servant leadership wins the hearts of countless followers.

Modeling Christ

As we grow closer to God in prayer, deepen our faith through study of the Word of God, develop a clear sense of God's plan for His children, and root sin out of our lives through Penance and the development of virtue, we build a sense of humble conviction about Christ. That conviction and gentle confidence make the faith attractive to young people. In other words, as we grow in holiness, young people will flock to our program for many of the same reasons they came to Christ.

Our Care for Young People

God has asked us to be His ambassadors to young people. We must beg Him for the grace to care deeply for them as He does. We show that care by our genuine interest in them and the things that are important to them, by making sacrifices of our time and energy to spend quality time with them, following up on past conversations, finding creative, encouraging ways to share our faith with them, and even by offering a needed challenge at certain moments. Our care has the potential to prepare their hearts to accept Christ's care for them. Usually, young people come to embrace God's care by experiencing genuine care from other adults in their lives. In this way, our ministry builds upon and reinforces the work of their parents in the home. Young people are quick to sense if we are ministering to them from a faith and a heart that is riveted with authentic care. This care is an essential ingredient.

Jesus Recognizes the Gifts of Others

Another essential ingredient in our work with young people is the art of discovering gifts in students, calling those gifts out, creatively putting them to use in the program, and developing them over time. These gifts may be in the area of acting, singing, speaking, running a small group, explaining the faith, or putting people at ease with a positive sense of humor. Young people often battle with low self-esteem and a poor self-image. This art of calling out gifts and putting them to use can help them see the hand of God in their lives and grow in their faith and trust in Him. It also helps to strengthen our program by getting the right people into proper places of leadership and using important gifts to spread the light of Christ.

Gentleness and Firmness

Since many young people wrestle with immaturity and love to test boundaries with adults, it is really helpful to develop the Christ-like balance of gentleness and firmness. Young people need adults who are gentle, supportive, encouraging, patient and joyful in their lives. St. Paul strongly encouraged these gifts in His letters to the Galatians and the Colossians. These gifts should be what stands out in our ministry. At the same time, we are given plenty of opportunities to offer a challenge or a correction to a young person. Even when we discern those moments, it should be offered in a positive manner, highlighting other strengths and gifts, framing it as an opportunity to become an even better Christian and leader among their peers, encouraging them to be responsible for their actions and to see how they can affect others negatively at times. Of course, we should always offer corrections in private when possible. They should never be given when we are overcome by our anger and frustration. To offer correction then would run the risk of ruining in a few moments what we have been working hard to build up for a long time. As we spend time praying with the Gospels, ask Jesus to cultivate in you His leadership skill.

In conclusion, we can learn everything that we need to know about Christian leadership from the example of Jesus Christ. He teaches us plenty by word and deed, and He sets the bar rather high for youth ministers. It is really helpful to remember that He promises to be with us always until the end of time, especially in the Eucharist. It is also good to remember that He has poured forth the Holy Spirit upon us, the spirit of power, who enables us to be witnesses to the Resurrection, to grow in charity and holiness, and to humbly let His light shine through us into the lives of young people by exercising the leadership gifts that He models for us.

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Jesus as a Leader

Scripture Reading	Leadership Qualities	Jesus as a Leader	Christian Leaders
Matthew 21:12-17 (Jesus cleanses the temple)	Principle centered	A person of principle	Lead lives based on the values and beliefs that they embrace: walk the talk
John 2:1-11 (The Wedding at Cana)	Incorruptible	A person of integrity	Demonstrate integrity by being true to values in word and action.
Matthew 5:11-12 (The Beatitudes)	Vision oriented	A visionary	Establish a vision that gives direction to all members.
Matthew 22:15-22 (A question about paying taxes)	Proactive	A proactive person	Hold values that determine how they will act; do not react out of feelings and situations.
Matthew 15:32-39 (Feeding the four thousand)	Compassionate	A person of compassion	Respond to the needs and pains of others.
John 8:1-11 (A woman caught in adultery)	Forgiving	A forgiver of past transgressions	Forgive unconditionally while pointing to the future
Luke 10:38-42 (Jesus visits Martha and Mary)	Listening	A listener	Listen to people and really try to hear their issues, concerns and feelings
Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus heals a person who is paralyzed)	Interdependent	Interdependent with God and others	Rely on God; rely on the gifts of the community to complement personal gifts and weaknesses
Matthew 10:5-15 (The Mission of the Twelve)	Empowering	Empowering of others	Share power; know that God has the power; bring out the best in others: equip others with the skills needed to contribute
John 13:1-8;12-15 (Jesus washes the disciples' feet)	Serving others	A servant leader	Meet the needs of the people they lead; don't ask others to do what they themselves are not willing to do

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Leadership Qualities, Skills, and Resources

Courage:

The mindset that enables a person to face difficulty. Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the willingness to do something in spite of fear.

Visionary:

The ability to see the bigger picture in a situation or organization, and dream of possibilities that would be more beneficial. A visionary is one who imagines possibilities.

Change Agent:

The ability to not only move people and things in a new direction, but also to accept, handle and thrive in the midst of change. A change agent is one who can create a sense of urgency for a new direction, and guide a group down the path of that new direction.

Decisive:

Having the willingness and ability to make a decision, judgment call or resolution. Leaders would often rather make the wrong decision than no decision at all.

Perseverance:

The ability to remain steady in a course of action; having tenacity and endurance despite hardship or discouragement.

Risk Taking:

The courage to begin a course of action or make a decision even though failure is a possibility. Risk takers realize that no one succeeds at every turn, and sometimes more can be learned from failure than success.

Creativity:

The ability to use originality, innovation and imagination to solve problems or dream dreams. A creative leader thinks "outside the box."

Confidence:

The steady belief or trust in yourself and your abilities. The opposite of confidence is low self esteem or feeling worthless.

Self-Discipline:

The ability to control your actions and order your behavior appropriately.

Honesty:

Having the truthfulness and integrity in your actions and dealings with others.

Sense of Humor:

is an ability to see the lighter side of a situation or circumstance. The key to having a sense of humor is having the ability to not take yourself too seriously. Leaders can laugh at themselves.

Suggested activities:

1. Have youth identify one person, preferably someone who is well known to the group, who exhibits each character quality, and discuss in a group setting why they think each person listed exhibits that particular quality.
2. Have the youth rank which characteristics from the list they think are most important in a leader, and why.
3. Have the youth identify which attributes they feel they already possess, and which ones they need to develop more strongly. Discuss possible ways to develop each attribute.

Faith-Based Resources:

St. Mary's Press

SMP, a Catholic organization, features over 50 trainings manuals, books, resources and publications on Hispanic Youth Ministry, Retreats, Games and Activities, Religious Education Curriculum, Leadership Development and other published youth development resources. SMP also offers workshops for both youth leaders and their adult mentors upon request.

Hispanic Ministry Center/Urban Youth Workers Institute

HMC, a partner organization of the National Network of Youth Ministries, hosts the largest Christian urban youth workers conference in the western regional United States each year in May. The event gathers over 1,200 urban leaders from numerous denominations and ethnicities for training, networking, and refreshment. HMC provides year-round training and mentoring following the conference through their staff and resources provided on their website.

National Study of Youth and Religion

NSYR has a listing of links to 27 Youth Ministry Centers, Programs and Organizations that are helpful to those involved in youth ministry.

Youth Leadership Training Resources

Tomorrowspresent.org provides several Youth Leadership Development resources from a Catholic perspective for teens that are tailored to different faith traditions in addition to training materials encouraging interfaith dialogue.

Secular Resources:

Youth Leadership.Com

Youth Leadership.com has a library of youth leadership publications, listing of journals and magazines, organizations and websites, conferences and programs as well as professional development opportunities related to youth leadership development.

The Search Institute

The Search Institute offers training sessions on Youth, Money, and Assets, Service-Learning, Youth Leadership and Youth Empowerment in Your Community. The Search Institute has a variety of printed resources available for online purchase.

New Light Leadership Coalition

NLLC provides a curriculum outline, training modules and an extensive list of recommended readings to correspond to the curriculum. NLLC also hosts Youth Leadership Development Trainings Program for schools and organizations upon request.

Effective Communities Project

This is a model for developing a community-based youth leadership development program. The website is organized around: program evaluation, organizational effectiveness, strategic grant making and capacity building. ECP also provides Leadership Skill Development training for youth, staff persons and volunteers.

Fire Starter Youth Power Curriculum

As a free online tool, The Firestarter Curriculum works with young people to educate, engage, and empower this generation of social change leaders. The website also includes excellent resources and links to how-to sites that can help youth take action and change their communities.

Center for Youth Development and Policy Research

The Academy for Educational Development is a wonderful resource for information about youth development trends, best practices, toolkits and other related publications.

The Innovation Center

The innovation center has a wealth of practical materials—training programs, tool kits, and other vehicles—to strengthen organizations, advance the field of youth development, and promote social justice.

Gender Differences: A Worksheet on Leadership Styles by Mariam MacGregor

Traditional Leadership Model (“Masculine”)

How things get done:	Competition
Organizational Structure:	Hierarchy
Expectations:	Winning
How Problems are Solved:	Rational

Key Characteristics

High control, strategic, unemotional, analytical

Power

Among Traditional leaders, “position” power tops the list of frequently used styles.

Outcomes

While the Traditional approach tends to be faster, it does not encourage working with others, shared accountability or participation in problem-solving. The Traditional approach relies more heavily on things outside the organization.

Teamwork

The lessons learned through traditional activities often have less to do with teamwork than they do with competitiveness and winning.

Traditional

team sports do not teach the same positive human values as cooperative games do.

Participation

Many Traditional leaders see increased member participation in decision-making as a breakdown of their influence, and in some cases, a threat to stability of the organization.

Relationships with Others

Many Traditional leaders regard relationships as a means to an end (“making connections”) rather than regarding the relationship as important alone.

Conflict Management

Traditional leaders prefer a competitive response to conflict, frequently seen as a “win-lose” approach. The other type of behavior favored is “avoidance.”

Problem Solving

Many Traditional leaders still over-rely on measurable ways to identify solutions to complex problems. Collecting data and information is how they effectively problem solve.

Pitching In

Many Traditional leaders believe that pitching in with the group can tarnish their image as the leader.

Modern Leadership Model (“Feminine”)

How things get done:	Cooperative
Organizational Structure:	Team
Expectations:	Quality Output
How Problems are Solved:	Rational

Key Characteristics

Low control, empathetic, collaborative, high standards

Power

Modern leaders tend to use “personal” power to influence the organization and motivate others.

Outcomes

The Modern approach often helps create a more cooperative atmosphere by encouraging participation and shared accountability. The Modern approach draws more on the group's internal resources.

Teamwork

Connectedness and building networks (where one person is at the center) rather than hierarchies (where one person is on top) are elements of Modern Leadership.

Participation

Participation by all members is the philosophy for Modern leaders, including high communication, member input, encouraged creativity and increased autonomy.

Relationships with Others

For Modern leaders, establishing & maintaining effective relationships is a cornerstone on which this approach is built.

Conflict Management

Modern leaders work together with others to resolve conflict, and seek to find different, more satisfying solutions to complex problems rather than those proposed by either side. The other type of behavior favored is “accommodation” (finding room for everyone).

Problem Solving

Inductive reasoning (trusting a feeling) is used and allows the leader to solve problems with less measurable information. It is often more innovation-directed and is valued in organizations because it has to do with working with people.

Pitching In

Most Modern leaders are willing to put themselves into any situation to help out.

Self-Evaluation for Youth Leaders

*Adapted from Designing Student Leadership Programs: Transforming the Leadership Potential of Youth by Mariam MacGregor, Youth Leadership.Com, 2nd Edition 2001, pages 63-65.
Used with permission from Mariam MacGregor.*

Think about your relationships with others, your skills in helping others, your ability to lead others (as individuals and in groups), and what you bring to being a leader. Then:

- Read through the list of characteristics/activities and decide which ones for which you are doing the right amount, ones for which you should do more, and ones for which you should do less. Check each item in the appropriate place.
- Some goals that are not listed may be more important to you than those listed. Write those goals on the blank lines.
- Go back over the whole list and circle the numbers of the three or four activities/skills in which you want to improve the most.

Communication Skills:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
1. Talking in a group	_____	_____	_____
2. Being brief and concise	_____	_____	_____
3. Being forceful	_____	_____	_____
4. Drawing others out	_____	_____	_____
5. Listening actively	_____	_____	_____
6. Thinking before speaking	_____	_____	_____
7. Keeping my remarks on the topic	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____	_____

Observation Skills:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
9. Realizing tension in the group	_____	_____	_____
10. Noting who talks to whom	_____	_____	_____
11. Noting interest level of the group	_____	_____	_____
12. Sensing the feelings of individuals	_____	_____	_____
13. Noting who is being “left out”	_____	_____	_____
14. Noting reactions to my comments	_____	_____	_____
15. Noting when the group avoids the topic	_____	_____	_____
16. _____	_____	_____	_____

Problem-Solving Skills:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
17. Stating problems or goals	_____	_____	_____
18. Asking for ideas and opinions	_____	_____	_____
19. Giving ideas	_____	_____	_____
20. Evaluating ideas critically	_____	_____	_____
21. Summarizing the discussion	_____	_____	_____
22. Clarifying issues	_____	_____	_____
23. _____	_____	_____	_____

Morale- Building Skills:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
24. Showing interest in others	_____	_____	_____
25. Working to keep people from being ignored	_____	_____	_____
26. Helping people reach agreement	_____	_____	_____
27. Reducing tension	_____	_____	_____
28. Supporting the rights of individuals in the face of group pressure	_____	_____	_____
29. Giving praise or appreciation	_____	_____	_____
30. _____	_____	_____	_____

Expressing Emotions:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
31. Telling others what I feel	_____	_____	_____
32. Restraining my emotions	_____	_____	_____
33. Disagreeing openly	_____	_____	_____
34. Expressing warm feelings	_____	_____	_____
35. Expressing gratitude	_____	_____	_____
36. Being sarcastic	_____	_____	_____
37. _____	_____	_____	_____

Facing & Accepting Emotional Situations:	Need to Do Less	OK	Need to Do More
38. Facing conflict & anger	_____	_____	_____
39. Embracing closeness & affection	_____	_____	_____
40. Handling silence	_____	_____	_____
41. Facing disappointment	_____	_____	_____
42. Dealing with tension	_____	_____	_____
43. _____	_____	_____	_____

10 Steps for Implementing a Youth Leadership Development Program

Adapted from Leadership 101: Developing Leadership Skills for Resilient Youth, Facilitators Guide by Mariam MacGregor, Youthleadership.com, 2000, page 79. Used with permission from Mariam MacGregor.

The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN)

FASTEN: Sharing Knowledge, Strengthening Connections, Improving Outcomes

1. Evaluate Organization's Capacity

Before you start planning, examine whether your organization:

- values youth,
- has opportunities for youth to serve,
- is willing to support a program and
- has funding/time to develop and carry out a program.

It might be helpful to do a S.W.O.T analysis to identify the *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities* and *threats* in regards to your organization's ability to develop and sustain a leadership development program.

2. Determine Program Purpose

Clearly define and articulate the program's goals and objectives. Drafting a statement of purpose will help you make future decisions. A clear statement of purpose should include:

- the values of the program,
- what the ultimate goals are,
- how to achieve those goals, and
- who is to be involved.

3. Decide Target Population

Identify the type of youth that will be participating in your program:

- Determine any special needs, previous leadership experience or training, and qualities or skills they need to develop.
- Select adult leaders for the group based on the age, ethnicity/race, gender, socio-economic status, and life experiences of the targeted youth.
- Begin to explore the leadership approach that will best fit this group.

4. Investigate Youth Leadership Issues

- Seek to understand what youth leadership development actually means.
- Investigate current trends and ideas for youth leadership development.
- Identify the specific social and developmental issues that the youth in your target population face.

5. Identify and Involve Key Leaders

Determine key "decision makers" and leaders in your organization and community that should be involved in the program development process. Typically, when people are involved in a program, they will be supportive of it. Look for leaders among:

- current management and staff of your organization;
- members of the larger community; and
- local and national organizations that provide resources for leadership development programs.

This range of advisors can provide key insights about the operation of the program—possible problems and pitfalls to avoid. They may also help publicize and promote your program.

6. Create Budget and Explore Funding Options

- Create a budget, estimating the cost of supplies and training materials, space (if you are renting or leasing), equipment, and labor. Also estimating the number of participants, staff and volunteers is important as this will affect cost.
- Determine how much funding can come from within your organization.
- Explore potential outside funding from private organizations or government agencies if necessary.

7. Determine Leadership Strategy and Select Curriculum

Determine your leadership strategy by asking *how* and *what* you want to teach your youth. You can then select curriculum based on your strategy. Youth leadership development curricula follow many different strategies, such as skill building, character development, or developing "competency arenas."

8. Determine Volunteer Standards and Expectations

It's important to create a simple application and screening process for adult leaders or volunteers that includes checking references. Create "job descriptions" that outline the roles and responsibilities of youth, staff and other volunteers. In addition, if you want to use youth volunteers in the program, it's helpful to determine specific prerequisites for volunteer candidates such as leadership potential, interest, competency, and commitment.

9. Remember to Develop the Staff and Volunteers

Once you identify and select your youth and adult participants it is important to help *them* grow in leadership. Continually equip your adult staff to teach, model, nurture and develop young people as leaders.

10. Evaluate the Program

Assess the effectiveness of the program from all perspectives: youth, staff and volunteers. Measure the progress of youth leaders and assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting the goals set. Have the outcomes you desired been achieved?

E-mail us at support@fastennetwork.org if you have general questions or comments about FASTEN.

Adapted from Leadership 101: Developing Leadership Skills for Resilient Youth, Facilitators Guide by Mariam MacGregor, Youthleadership.com, 2000, page 79. Used with permission from Mariam MacGregor.

Conflict Resolution

In order to work well with other people, leaders must be good at resolving conflict. A conflict is a situation causing disunity or discord between two individuals or groups. Conflicts are usually caused by perceived feelings of hurt, insult, or injury. To resolve a conflict, it is important to maintain control of emotions. Use the following steps to approach solving conflicts with others peacefully:

Steps to Solving a Conflict

1. **Adopt a Peaceful Attitude**
You should never be the aggressor or the cause of a conflict. Try to avoid physical confrontations if possible.
2. **Listen! Listen! Listen!**
The main problem during conflict is that both parties want to get their point across. This causes them to want to speak before the other person is heard. It is important to LISTEN in order to resolve a conflict.
3. **State Your Desire to Work Things Out**
The other party must know that you are willing to compromise. A compromise is the process of give and take that leads to a middle ground where BOTH PARTIES are content.
4. **Be a Model of Support and Cooperation**
Be sincere in your attempt to reconcile with another party.

Guidelines to Resolving a Conflict

- √ Never approach an individual in front of other people as this will only cause defensiveness. The person will likely retaliate instead of cooperating with you.
- √ Do not insult the other party. Tell him what he is doing that is hurting you and ask him to stop.
- √ Do not provoke the other person or group. This will only lead to further conflict and, potentially, violence.
- √ Be calm! Instead of approaching the situation emotionally, give yourself a moment to cool down before trying to deal with the conflict. Emotion can cause unnecessary confusion, leaving the root of the problem neither discovered nor solved.

Conflict Management Suggestions

1. Have the team identify what criteria they will use to make decisions and then evaluate the conflict using the agreed upon criteria.
2. Have participants silently post their opinion and ideas on the board and write the pros and cons of each suggestion.
3. When two people disagree, ask each to reiterate the opposite position until the other person feels his position is fully understood.
4. Summarize the issues on which there is agreement to show progress and possibilities.
5. Look for non-verbal signs of dissent and address them openly.
6. Never take sides. Instead, suggest a way for the team to overcome its roadblock.

The Eight Steps of Atonement

Atonement is a process for making amends for a fault or wrongdoing. In order to resolve our problems with one another, we must follow these steps:

1. Point Out Wrong or Fault – Let it be known that a wrong was committed.
2. Acknowledge the Wrong – No matter who brings it to your attention, if you were at fault, admit it.
3. Confession – Confess your wrongdoing to your Creator and to the person whom you wronged.
4. Repentance – Show remorse for your actions and sincerely promise to change.
5. Atonement – If you can, do something to make up for your actions.
6. Forgiveness – Seek forgiveness from the individual wronged and your Creator. Remember, also, to forgive yourself for your transgressions.
7. Reconciliation – Settle differences and make peace with yourself and with those whom you have wronged.
8. Perfect Union – Oneness with your Creator, family and friends.

Adapted from Youth Leadership Development Workbook written and published by New Light Leadership Coalition, 2001-2003, pages 62-63. Used with permission.

Reflections on Youth Leadership Boards

by John Campbell

Over the years at St. Bernadette parish, we have experimented with every type of youth leadership model that we could find. My biggest realization through this process has been that, like most things, you will get out of youth leadership what you are willing to put into it. With that being said, much is also dependent upon the crop of youth in a given year. Some years, the harvest will be plenty, and the labor all seems worthwhile. Some years the harvest will be meager, and you ask yourself over and over – Why? Why do we do this to ourselves?

The following are short thoughts on different models we have tried:

The most effective way that we have found to facilitate young people to accomplish the work of youth ministry is to have a youth board with “officers” (or whatever other title you designate) who have clearly delineated and defined roles. In this model you can easily train each officer to fulfill the requirements/duties of his or her office. The downsides to this model include the likelihood of burnout, the complications with your leaders’ other commitments, and the possibility of losing some good candidates due to their involvement in other activities during a certain part of the year. Another challenge of this model is the process of choosing the leaders, and the potential for alienating those who are not chosen. Finally, young people, like most adults, are often very bad at empowering, enabling and delegating to allow others to share in the work and joy of Christian leadership. Therefore, when working with this model, it takes vigilance throughout the year to try to make sure the officers include others in the ministry.

Another model is the committee model. This model is very effective in that it allows many to share the wealth and burden of leadership. Great things can come of this model if you have very flexible, patient and proactive adults who are willing to work with a variety of schedules and do whatever it takes to enable and motivate the committees to continue to meet and plan month after month. Without such persistence, however, the committees fail to meet and make necessary decisions and plans.

The model that we currently use at St. Bernadette is a leadership team. Although I do not consider this to be the best model in terms of forming youth leaders, it is the most flexible because it allows anyone at any time to participate in the work of ministry. It basically entails a once a month meeting that anyone can attend to plan the upcoming meetings and activities. Therefore, some youth participate in leadership throughout the year, and others only occasionally. The downside to this model is the lack of continuity which makes a common vision, and any training very challenging. In this model, the roles and responsibilities cannot be clearly defined; therefore more things can fall through the cracks or be left up to the adults.

Volunteers play a critical role in youth leadership. At St. Bernadette, we have burned out leadership gurus, we have frustrated trainers, we have taken volunteers who have all the answers and caused them to run and hide. Each of these things happened when an eager volunteer came in with a specific vision of what they wanted to happen, and the goal of making leaders out of all of the youth. If, however, a volunteer is willing to work with young people, and a leadership team is their opportunity, that volunteer is probably more likely to be patient with the kids, work with them where they are at, take them only where each is willing to go, and is usually fairly successful.

While these reflections may lead one to question whether having youth leadership is worth the effort, I believe that youth involvement in leadership is a crucial aspect of youth ministry for many reasons. First, their ideas are typically better than ours. Second, if our youth leave for college and beyond as merely spectators when it comes to their involvement in Church and their faith, I doubt that their faith will be sustained through the storms of life. It is my hope, therefore, that you are willing to try to develop youth leaders, and we can pray for each other as we seek ways to allow God to touch these young people that we have the privilege of serving.

John Campbell served as the Coordinator of Youth Ministry at St. Bernadette for 20 years before accepting the position as the Director of the Arlington Diocese San Damiano Spirituality Center in White Post, VA. He lives in Winchester, volunteers in youth ministry at Sacred Heart, and is married with five children.

*“These broken, wounded, and completely unpretentious people forced me to let go of my relevant self—the self that can **do** things, **show** things, **prove** things, **build** things—and forced me to reclaim that unadorned self in which I am completely vulnerable, **open to receive and give love** regardless of any accomplishments... I am telling you all this because I am deeply convinced that the **Christian leader** of the future is called to be completely *irrelevant* and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own **vulnerable** self.”*

-Henri Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus, p. 28-30

Structuring an Effective Core Team

by Rob Tessier

The youth ministry Core Team is the group of volunteers who plan, prepare, and execute the main teen gathering at the parish. This gathering is frequently on Sunday nights, but it may take place a different night of the week as well. The idea behind having a “main weekly meeting” is to provide an opportunity to bring in a large number of teens for catechesis, community building, service, and social activities whereby they then go out to participate in their faith life within the parish or other youth ministry offerings.

This article is based on developing a Core Team intended to minister to a Sunday night program that serves the purpose of meeting the catechetical needs of the high school teens along with creating a fun environment where they can engage in community building, spirituality, service, and even leadership. A Core Team can be comprised of four different types of people.

Here is an example of the types of people that might be placed on a Core Team:

1. Young adults- these are volunteers who are either single or newly married that don't have any connection to the teens in the ministry other than the desire to help young people fall more in love with Jesus. It is good if the Core Team is comprised of about 35-50% young adults.
2. Parents- these are volunteers who are identified as being great in working with all the youth, but happen to also have their own child in the youth ministry. Having a 5-15% of the Core represented by parents can be healthy.
3. Clergy/ Consecrated- this could include the priest assigned to youth ministry in the parish, a consecrated member of a religious community, or a deacon. It is a beautiful gift if the Core Team can be comprised of at least 5-15% clergy or consecrated.
4. Teen leaders- these are generally junior and senior teens who have demonstrated qualities of leadership and the desire to be a peer leader. Teens strong in their faith and committed to their peers should represent 35-50% of the Core Team.

The four different types of people each bring a wonderful charism to a team.

Young adults generally have a lot of time and energy to pour into creating exciting activities. In addition, while they are adults, they are closer in age to the teens, providing a solid role model for teens to look to as examples. Parents can provide wisdom and understanding of teens' lives that younger adults don't have. Solid parent leaders also offer a great example to teens of fatherhood, motherhood, and family life. Clergy and consecrated members can bring the group greater spiritual insight and theological understanding, especially when dealing with more difficult subjects. The teens are further inspired by their lifetime commitment to the Church. Teen leaders are vital in assisting with the execution of the activities. A teen perspective can really help planning teams make good decisions on how to most effectively present an activity.

In addition, a teen giving a witness talk is a powerful tool to open the other teens up to opportunities for conversion.

The size of a Core Team should roughly reflect 25% of the size of the youth program. For example, five Core Team members serving a group of twenty teens is good,

or ten members for forty teens, or twenty members for eighty teens. The Core Team, if possible, should be split into smaller units called “Planning Teams”. If the Core Team is comprised of six adults and six teens, then consider having three planning teams with two adults and two teens assigned to each. In this situation, a planning team would be responsible for planning every third Sunday night. The entire Core Team would be needed at every Sunday night to support the plan of the group that is leading. However, the burden of design and preparation only falls on teams periodically instead of weekly. If a Core Team is large enough to have four planning teams, this affords the opportunity to only have to plan for one night a month.

Core Teams need to meet outside of the youth gatherings at least once a month, and possibly twice a month, to plan upcoming nights. These Core Team meetings ideally will take place at a consistent time and place. For example, the first Wednesday of every month from 7-9pm in the Youth Room with pizza provided, is a great way to keep it consistent. It is required that everyone attend. The first forty-five minutes consists of eating & socializing, praying as a group, and having a brief meeting that consists of looking at the schedule and taking an opportunity for some formation. The second part of the meeting is an opportunity to gather into planning teams for the purpose of planning upcoming nights. The CYM should not be on a planning team. The CYM should move around and visit with each Planning Team in an attempt to offer support, input, and ideas. Each planning team should have a coordinator who is responsible for recording the outline of the plan and tracking who has taken charge of various details for the night. The outline of the night should be sent to the CYM a week before the night they are planning for.

Core Teams should also be spiritually fed and formed. The beginning of each semester is a good time to schedule a five to six hour meeting on a Saturday or Sunday that delves into opportunities for prayer & spirituality in addition to presenting formation to help the team members grow in faith & leadership. These are also good opportunities to present the theme for the semester and ideas or resources for each week of the semester.

CYMs should be careful not to simply distribute topics to planning teams without a source of support. Include church documents, books, or other resources to support the teaching points for that topic. Topics should follow a progressive theme/syllabus. The Secondary Religion Guidelines for the Diocese of Arlington should be used to develop your curriculum. There are other organizations and publishers that provide sample youth ministry programs.

In closing, it is not recommended for a CYM to try and be his or her own Core Team. Part of the job of a CYM is to develop other strong volunteer leaders who can then be more branches for the ministry that help to reach out and grow the ministry within a parish.

Rob Tessier has been a full time Youth Minister for 12 years and currently serves as the Director of Youth Ministry at All Saints in Manassas. Rob created the Junior High Workcamp and Theatre Ministry models that are now used by several parishes. A recipient of the Don Bosco Youth Ministry Award, Rob has given presentations for Youth Ministers in various places including for the NFCYM National Convention. Rob lives in Bristow with his wife and 6 children.

How to Recruit Strong Volunteers for your Youth Ministry

by Rob Tessier

Whether starting a new program or reviving a present one, recruiting volunteers is an ongoing task for all Coordinators of Youth Ministry (CYMs). A collection of strong volunteers can be the needed ingredient to create a vibrant youth ministry program. At the same time, selecting one or more poor volunteers can land a ministry in troubled water. Therefore, it is important to carefully discern how to recruit strong volunteers.

Here are five steps to building and recruiting a strong volunteer core:

1. Define your need and ideal candidate

- a. Just like an electric company would not hire a plumber to wire a home, it is important that a youth ministry program does not recruit just anyone to be a volunteer. Defining the criteria needed in a candidate is vital.
 - i. Love for Jesus and love for youth- Any person who is going to work in direct ministry with young people needs to have a true passion for their faith and a true care for teens. In some way they need to be able to articulate that their goal is to bring youth to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. In addition, it should be evident that the volunteer has a core spirituality and an active prayer and sacramental life.
 - ii. Commitment to the ministry- A strong volunteer is someone who is able to keep a commitment. In some ministries, that might be defined as every Sunday from 4-9pm and one planning meeting a month. Consistently fulfilling the commitment is vital. In the course of a year, there should be no more than 2-3 Sundays missed.
 - iii. Team player- A ministry team requires people who bring good ideas, but are also willing to sacrifice their own ideas at times to be a follower. A collaborative spirit is imperative on a ministry team.
 - iv. Clean personal life- It's important to be sure a new volunteer is in full compliance with the child protection policies and guidelines, is living a moral personal life, and is a lawful person who avoids any instance of scandal.
- b. The criteria described in "a" are important for a direct youth ministry volunteer (one working relationally with teens). An indirect minister is someone who supports the ministry by providing food or assisting in various support roles. A person in this category does not need to be scrutinized as closely; therefore, this article will focus on seeking the direct youth ministry volunteers.

2. Look in the right places

- a. Ask other parish leaders (a personal reference will turn up your strongest volunteers)-
 - i. The RCIA coordinator is someone that may be able to recommend some people who have gone through RCIA and would be good with teens. New Catholics can sometimes make the best youth leaders because they are on fire with their newly found faith.
 - ii. The pastor or parochial vicar may have encountered someone in marriage preparation or even in conversation after Mass that would be a potential candidate. Priests can be a great resource for identifying good volunteers.
 - iii. Highly active parishioners, parish council members, leaders of committees, and the young adult ministry at the parish will often know of people they can recommend to be contacted about volunteering in youth ministry.
- b. Be observant while at parish events (trust your instincts and God's prodding to reveal the right people to you)
 - i. Daily Mass is a great place to spot a couple of key volunteers.
 - ii. A prayer gathering, or pro-life event, or young adult social can all be places to discover new potential volunteers.
- c. Advertise the need (this has the greatest potential of discovering someone that is not desired; however, this method can discover a new parishioner who moved into the parish after being a stellar youth ministry volunteer somewhere else)
 - i. The Bulletin is one place to post your ad, both in the regular parish section and on the Youth Ministry page.
 - ii. Standing at the pulpit to make an announcement about the youth ministry program and stating the opportunity for volunteer involvement can be very helpful in late August.
 - iii. If your parish holds a ministry fair, be sure to have a booth and be ready to discover new volunteers.

3. Invite, screen, and discern

- a. Invite- Upon discovering a new potential volunteer, offer a personal invitation to them to discuss the youth ministry program. If possible, have this discussion free of distractions and time limitations. The discussion is an opportunity to learn about the new volunteer and share with them the goals and activities of Youth Ministry. It should be stated up front that the meeting is an opportunity for both parties to learn more about the other and discern whether it is a good ministry fit.
- b. Screen- If the discussion proves to be revealing a potentially strong volunteer, then some sort of an application should be given to him/her along with the Virtus and background check paperwork. It should be requested that everything be completed within a week. A follow-up meeting can be scheduled to go through everything. The application should be one that asks about their spiritual and moral life in addition to

questioning their desire to work with youth in a relational ministry setting. A sample application is provided on the Office of Youth Ministry website.

- c. Discern- After the discussions and review of the application, discern whether the person is a good fit. If both the volunteer and the CYM feel it is a good fit, then be sure to clarify the commitment before both agreeing to work together.

4. Retain strong volunteers through pro-active measures

- a. Vision, leadership, and organization- Volunteers want to be led and they want to be a part of something that has a mission, goals, and clearly defined expectations. One of the best ways to keep volunteers is to communicate clearly the schedule, the expectations, and the vision.
- b. Gratefulness- Thanking a volunteer goes a long way in keeping a volunteer. Verbal praise when they do something well should consistently be part of a CYM's behavior. In addition, some sort of an appreciation party or dinner should be provided at the conclusion of each semester. The Office of Youth Ministry offers a great Appreciation Dinner to which you can bring your volunteers as a way of thanking them. A hand written note of thanks and a small gift at the end of a year is a wonderful way to show gratefulness. A volunteer who feels appreciated is much more likely to continue.
- c. Sense of ownership- As a volunteer becomes more integral to the team, they begin to feel a sense of ownership about what they are involved in. As long as that is tempered with following the vision and working within the parameters set forth by leadership, a sense of ownership will help strong volunteers stay longer and speak proudly about their involvement. A volunteer with a healthy sense of ownership will help attract other strong volunteers.

5. Re-direct and release poor volunteers

- a. As a year is closing, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness and level of commitment represented by each volunteer. Sometimes there is a need to re-direct or release a volunteer that proves to be a distraction or a disruption to the youth ministry program. Though difficult to do, by letting that volunteer go, you will probably be helping your Core Team and your youth ministry program will improve.
- b. For a volunteer who simply is not pulling their weight and is proving very inconsistent, it is best to sit down with them and review the commitment. Likely, there are other family and personal factors making it tough to keep the commitment. By recognizing these other factors and letting the volunteer know that it might be better to spend more time taking care of those other life situations as opposed to volunteering can sometimes be very freeing for the volunteer. Certainly, the door does not need to be totally shut. After a semester or a year off, that person can re-consider coming back if they can keep the commitment.

- c. For a volunteer who is a disruption or distraction due to not being a good team player or resistant to the vision set forth by the CYM, a different tactic may be needed. In this case, it's important to sit down with the volunteer and provide examples of how that volunteer has been disrupting the program. It may be helpful to have a priest or other trusted person who understands the situation in the meeting as well. Hopefully, it will become clear to the volunteer that they too would be happier volunteering in a different program that they find better fits their vision.

In closing, if one pays close attention when building strong leaders, a youth ministry program will not have to do significant recruiting each year. Some volunteers will stay for more than 10 years and others will come seeking to volunteer because of the good reputation that you've developed.

Rob Tessier has been a full time Youth Minister for 12 years and currently serves as the Director of Youth Ministry at All Saints in Manassas. Rob created the Junior High Workcamp and Theatre Ministry models that are now used by several parishes. A recipient of the Don Bosco Youth Ministry Award, Rob has given presentations for Youth Ministers in various places including for the NFCYM National Convention. Rob lives in Bristow with his wife and 6 children.

Effective Practices in Leading Small Faith Communities

by Eric McDade

A comprehensive parish youth ministry program should provide young people with small faith groups or communities. While there are benefits to large-group activities, young people tend to grow in their faith when they have regular, consistent time with small faith group adult facilitators. Two to three adults leading each small group of 10-15 teens provide an excellent ratio to build strong relationships. Following this model and the ten practices listed below will help you to develop a community where young people feel comfortable learning, sharing, and growing in their faith with their peers.

1. Create single-sex groups

A lot of the socialization in high school centers on impressing members of the opposite sex. Segregating young people by gender offers them an environment where they are likely to feel more comfortable being open and honest about what's really going on in their lives.

2. Model the faith well

Live out a deep spiritual and sacramental life. Engage in spiritual reading and educate yourself about the faith so you are able to explain it in clear and convincing ways. Young people have a knack for spotting a phony; work to grow in faith so the youth will identify you as an authentic witness for Christ and his Church.

3. Work with a team of adult leaders and build good friendships with the other adults

Different teens will connect better with different adults. The advantage of having a team of adults lead a small faith community is that it offers young people a variety of witnesses to the faith. Additionally, insofar as the adults live out a life of Christian friendship, it provides a good witness and model for the youth.

4. Give good talks and tell good stories

Jesus frequently taught by telling stories. It's a good idea to follow his lead. Tell interesting, compelling stories that demonstrate different truths about the faith. If one can prudently reference stories about one's own life experience, these stories also have the added advantage of implicitly witnessing to the faith.

5. Inspire your young people

Developmentally, high school aged students are at a stage where they are striving for independence. When possible, it's better to inspire your teens to do the right thing instead of "telling them the right thing to do." Tell stories (see above point) that illustrate the point you're trying to make. Many young people who would be eager to argue or discuss a directive are less argumentative when suggestions are made through a good story.

6. Be a solid, consistent presence in your young people's lives

Being an effective witness for Christ and his Church requires sacrifice. It's important to make it a high priority to be present to the small faith community at the weekly meetings and regular retreats. High school teens go through lots of ups and downs, and adult mentors are charged with the task of bringing Christ's love to them. A consistent presence by adults goes a long way in demonstrating that Christ's love is with a young person in both good times and bad.

7. Participate in the Sacraments with your youth

As Catholics, we believe that the Sacraments touch the divine. Facilitating events where young people get to attend Mass or Confession should be a priority. In particular, there is a value to creating events where adult mentors and youth have the opportunity go to Confession. Confession can be perceived as a daunting experience by many youth. The experience can be made easier when they see adults they respect going to Confession. Additionally, penance service activities offer the adult mentors an opportunity to pull teens aside and address fears or concerns that a particular young person may have about Confession.

8. Take your youth on retreats and workshops

Retreats and workshops offer a unique opportunity for teens to grow in communion with God and each other. Retreats often are occasions for powerful conversion experiences, and help rally the youth together around a Christ-centered mission. It's important to build a number of retreats into the annual schedule.

9. Encourage the youth to see their peers as brothers/sisters in Christ

Youth spend the majority of their time with their peers. It's helpful to encourage the youth toward the notion that they are a Christian community that is called to both challenge and support each other. In the long run, the youth will profit tremendously if they can build solid Christian friendship with other youths that endure over the years.

10. Make sure the youth have fun

Especially during the school year, teens spend a lot of time in a structured environment. While they can profit from the predictability that structured meetings offer, it's important to make sure the adults are facilitating a fun, joyful atmosphere that is attractive to them. Make sure your teens have time to play, have fun, and socialize. Young people are required to go to school; there is no legal mandate that they attend a church youth program. Fundamentally, a small faith community must be joyful and attractive if young people are to attend.

Eric McDade has been helping run a small faith community for high schoolers since 1999.

Temperament and the Spiritual Life

“God takes our humanness seriously.” –Fr. Thomas Dubay

by Art and Laraine Bennett

Human nature, created by God in His image, is essentially good. Part of our human nature, and God’s gift to us, is our *temperament*. Our temperament is our predisposition to react in certain ways--our natural sociability, reactivity, and emotionality. Our temperament is not the whole of our personality, nor are we ever determined by our environment or by our nature, but temperament is a key aspect of our personality and thus worthy of our study.

As Saint Thomas Aquinas noted, grace never destroys nature, but rather builds upon it and perfects it. Many spiritual writers (such as Saint Francis de Sales and Romano Guardini) stress that *imperfections* that arise out of our natural temperament are weaknesses, but are not themselves sinful. But they can make certain virtues more difficult to acquire. For example, some people are, by temperament, prone to sadness, and find it extremely difficult to attain the virtue of joy and magnanimity; others tend to be impulsive, and attaining the virtues of constancy and self-control is a true battle. Still others seem to be prone to action rather than reflection, and others find it easy to forgive, but difficult to persevere.

The Four Temperaments and the Spiritual Life

The choleric temperament possesses almost naturally the virtue of zeal for souls, while peacefulness and mildness seem quite difficult to attain. The sanguine naturally exhibits joy, yet must do battle to acquire self-control. The melancholic seems naturally capable of piety and perseverance, while joy must be consciously acquired and prayed for. The phlegmatic is naturally quite gentle and humble, yet perhaps needs to acquire the virtues of audacity and fortitude. However, although imperfections may flow from one’s temperament, these can still be moderated or corrected by practice of the opposite virtue.¹ Nothing is impossible with God’s grace.

Transformation in Christ

Growth in the spiritual life is not merely a matter of adding a virtue or dropping a defect; it is not about harnessing a naturally virtuous temperament, or, conversely, about growing in virtue through great effort of the will; nor is it about self-perfection. It is, rather, a complete surrender to Christ, who draws us ever closer to him. This friendship with Christ requires us to change. We must be transformed in Him, yet we remain essentially who we are. We don’t start out human and become angels. Nor does God fashion us with a particular temperament, only to require us to become its opposite. Thus, one who is an enthusiastic, talkative *sanguine* will not necessarily be compelled to become a contemplative monk with a vow of silence. He may, however, having learned to control his passions, become a highly enthusiastic apostle for Christ!

Are some temperaments better suited to sanctity?

No single temperament is ideally suited to holiness. Every Christian is called to holiness. Each temperament has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. One might think that the melancholic, more naturally given to reflection and the interior life, would be uniquely suited to contemplation. However, Father Adolphe Tanquerey, author of the spiritual classic *The Spiritual*

¹ cf St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* and Romano Guardini, *Learning the Virtues*, also Jordan Auman OP, *Spiritual Theology*..

Life, writes that “There have been and there are contemplatives of every temperament and of every condition of life.”²

The following paragraphs will highlight particular aspects of each of the four classic temperaments that will apply particularly to the spiritual life. Bear in mind that most people have a combination of temperaments, so it would be wise to read the sections that apply to both temperaments.

The Choleric

Cholerics can be great saints...or great sinners. Once they perceive a goal, they will wholeheartedly pursue it. The key is pursuing the right goal! A choleric without a spiritual life, or one who is totally living on the natural level, is likely to be passionate, driven, prideful — even cruel and violent — in the pursuit of his goals. Saint Paul, is thought to have been choleric. Prior to his conversion, Saul was rabidly anti-Christian, “laying waste” to the Church, dragging off the early followers and throwing them in prison (Acts 8:3). After his encounter with Christ, he became even more fervent in spreading the gospel; becoming, perhaps, the greatest apostle.

Cholerics are neither joiners nor followers, preferring always to lead, and they are not naturally docile to direction. They must learn to follow Christ. Without spiritual guidance, the choleric tends to do his own will, and to be stubbornly attached to his own ideas (“my way or the highway”). This may cause difficulty for the choleric in his personal relationships as well as in his spiritual life. The choleric will tend to question, argue, and debate everything first.

The active and decisive choleric would be wise to remember the Benedictine motto *Ora et labora* (“pray and work”); work alone will never suffice in the spiritual realm. Virtues to work on include humility and compassion.

Spiritual keys for the choleric: With good direction and a deep prayer life, you will be zealous in the pursuit of holiness. You can be resolute in overcoming obstacles and difficulties and will exhibit zeal for souls. Strive to combat pride and individualism, and develop charity, humility, and a trustful surrender to Divine Providence. Assiduously avoid becoming a “clanging gong” without love. Remain rooted in prayer and in love for Christ, and you will also grow more compassionate, gentle in dealing with others, and patient in achieving spiritual goals. A challenging motto could be: “Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours.”

The Melancholic

It is said that a melancholic so longs for heaven that he can never be happy with less than perfection here on earth. Even as small children, melancholics are concerned with truth, beauty, and justice. They are naturally inclined toward reflection, prayer, and piety. They are sensitive, intelligent, and introspective, and drawn to a rich interior life.

If a melancholic is not aware of this intense spiritual longing for perfection, he may find himself extremely dissatisfied and frustrated on the natural level, without knowing why. Deep intimacy with God in prayer as well as a trusted confessor or spiritual director will be able to help him avoid a downward cycle of frustration, anxiety, and discouragement.

Saint John, who called himself the Beloved Disciple, may have been melancholic. He was the beloved disciple, the one who laid his head on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper, the only one who remained at the crucifixion, and the one to whom Jesus entrusted his mother. His was the mystical vision recorded in Revelations. His writing—of all the four gospels—is the most poetic, deeply mystical. “The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32) is appropriately written by an idealistic, truth-loving melancholic would.

² The Very Reverend Adolphe Tanquerey, S.S., D.D., *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*. Originally published in 1930 by Desclee & Co., reprinted by Tan Books: Rockford, 2000, # 1563.

Pride, in the melancholic, does not usually manifest itself as an attempt to gain recognition or honor, as it might in a choleric. The melancholic does not seek overt praise or commendation. However, the melancholic does fear failure! Thus, his pride shows up in his desire to be perfect and his fear of disgrace. In his pursuit of “perfection,” he may strive to do everything equally perfectly--work, school, home, church activities. He is tempted to hold everyone – himself and others — to an impossibly high standard. A melancholic can become so critical and exacting that no one else feels competent enough to collaborate on the project! His co-workers give up, feeling like they have done a poor job. In the end, the melancholic is alone, over-burdened, and resentful. In such a way, pride can seep in to destroy spiritual fruits.

Another great stumbling block for the melancholic is self-pity: a tendency which results in isolation, self-centeredness, envy, and even depression. Melancholics have a natural tendency to moodiness, which can be exacerbated by their thought processes. To gain joy, a melancholic should reflect in thanksgiving on God’s gifts. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” Saint Paul tells us” (Phil 4:4).

Spiritual keys for the melancholic: Conrad Hock notes that *confidence in God* and the *joyful bearing of his cross* are two pillars upon which rest the spiritual life for the melancholic. Meditating on the Gospels will encourage a deep and intimate love for Christ, helping you overcome self-pity, avoid discouragement, and gain joy. Your goal is not *perfectionism*, but the perfection of love. A spiritual director or good friend can help you discern when you might need to be more active and when it is time to rest, to keep up your physical strength and mental balance.

The Sanguine

Sanguines are quick to react, but not long to remember — naturally gifted with the virtue of forgiveness! They are extraverted, devoted, and life-loving, and have great people skills. St. Peter was a lovable (but inconstant) sanguine. “I will never betray you, Lord!” he promises. A few hours later, he denies Christ three times. At the Transfiguration he enthusiastically offers, “Let us set up three tents!” Even though, as Scripture also notes, “he did not know what he was saying” (Luke 9:33). He impetuously jumps out of the boat to walk on the water, fervently rebukes Jesus after He predicts the passion, and impulsively cuts off the Roman’s ear.

Relationships are important to the sanguine; he is very adept in dealing with people and is naturally considerate, forgiving, and responsive. He is fun-loving, generous, inquisitive, and enthusiastic. But enthusiasm can wear thin, if not augmented with real depth, and the sanguine’s natural friendliness and sociability can become superficial, if his priorities are not in order. He can be tempted to place his trust *solely* in other people, even to the point of denying what he knows to be right in order to please someone. He can be prone to vanity and making himself the center of attention.

In spiritual studies, the sanguine may be tempted to settle for a cursory or superficial understanding. He may find it difficult to stay focused in performing apostolic work: flitting from task to task depending on what appeals to him at the time, rarely persevering. But this can be remedied with motivation. If the sanguine is motivated by love for Christ, and is given good direction, structure, and formation, he will be a zealous and joyful apostle for the Lord! Virtues that are key for the sanguine to develop include self-control and perseverance.

Spiritual keys for the sanguine: Developing a deep interior life is crucial; without strong spiritual formation, you can become superficial, lack perseverance, and become easily driven by your emotions. Without self-discipline, you may neglect mental prayer or meditation. Commitment to daily prayer will bring you to an intimate relationship with Christ, the true friend of your soul.

The Phlegmatic

St. Thomas Aquinas is thought to have been a brilliant phlegmatic. Neither excitable nor loquacious as the sanguine and choleric temperaments, he was careful in speech and thought and detached, dispassionate, and methodical in his arguments. His temperament served him well as a philosopher: he thought things through deeply and thoroughly, never rushing to conclusions nor letting emotion get in the way or his reason.

Adaptable in groups, friendly, respectful of authority and tradition, phlegmatics are valued members of any team. They are gentle, quietly persevering, and faithful. They are naturally humble; they eschew flashiness or the spotlight. With attention to self-formation and motivation on the human level, they can also be superb leaders. Our pastor is a great leader who is phlegmatic. But he has a deep prayer life, is assiduous in his continued spiritual self-formation, seeks intellectually stimulating reading, and listens to motivational tapes every morning! Phlegmatics are solid and hardworking, and value family and country. They are true to their word and value honesty and integrity.

On the other hand, because they are so cooperative, they often fear conflict; they may avoid confrontation and go along with the status quo. Phlegmatics have a tendency to taking the road of least resistance. Without spiritual formation and motivation, they can become spiritual couch potatoes.

Phlegmatics do not naturally assert themselves, but if they are encouraged to take a leadership position, they can become wonderful servant leaders. They need to allow their talents to shine forth for the glory of God!

Spiritual keys for the phlegmatic: With good human and spiritual formation, you can combat any tendency to laziness or spiritual doldrums. By developing a personal relationship with Christ, through a strong prayer life, you will find the motivation you need to get beyond a “comfortable” spiritual life. Do not hide your light, but extend yourself to work ardently for the salvation of souls and the coming of Christ’s kingdom.

A Word on Teens

A person's temperament can be apparent from birth (cf Stella Chess, MD, and Alexander Thomas, MD, *Temperament in Clinical Practice*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1986.). Nevertheless, teens are in a period of transition, so it is possible that during these transitional years their temperament may not be as clearly identifiable as during earlier years; they may reveal one aspect of their personality more readily than others. Teens typically love knowing what their temperament is, and what their friends’ temperaments are. They enjoy discovering what this means about their tendencies, their strengths, and their difficulties. (For example, it often helps to know that a sanguine teen loves being with his friends...far more than he loves studying! Yet, if he has a melancholic parent, that parent will have a hard time relating to his natural preference! Or, on the other hand, a very studious melancholic teen might need a little boost to do something social with his classmates or church group.) Teens are typically quite interested in how temperaments affect their relationships (whether friendship, dating, or parental relationships). It is important, however, when working with teens to reinforce that one's temperament is only one aspect of our total personality: our total personality is also impacted by our education, our upbringing, our culture, and--most importantly--our free will to respond to God's grace.

Art and Laraine Bennett are members of Holy Trinity Parish in Gainesville, and have authored two books on temperament: [The Temperament God Gave You](#) and [The Temperament God Gave Your Spouse](#), both available from Sophia Press. www.SophiaInstitute.com Art Bennett is the Director of the Alpha Omega Clinics, which integrate sound psychology with the Catholic faith, in Virginia and Maryland. www.aoccs.org

Catholic Leadership Institute

VISION

We see a world where each individual understands their God-given mission in life and is doing their best to fulfill it; a world where Jesus' example of loving, servant leadership is modeled in every family, workplace, parish, and community; a world where Catholic leaders are the most influential voices in society.

MISSION

The Catholic Leadership Institute's mission is to build Catholic leaders for today and tomorrow. We empower people with the finest leadership skills and tools to help them reach their God-given potential as Catholic leaders and Christian witnesses in their family, workplace, community and Church.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Catholic Leadership Institute work and ministry is guided by four key principles:

1. Jesus is the ultimate model of leadership
2. Everyone was created perfectly by God for a purpose
3. Prayer guides all decisions
4. Always "Play to Win" – choose growth over fear in faith and life

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