

Certificate in Youth Ministry Session Descriptions

FOUNDATION 101

Roots of Youth Ministry

To fully understand youth ministry and where it is headed, we must first take a look at where it started and why. This is a brief overview of the history of youth ministry.

A Vision for Effective Youth Ministry

Every ministry to young people needs to have a clear mission and purpose, rooted in the larger mission of the Church, and needs to be able to identify clear values in the way that ministry is carried out. The US Bishops have provided a guiding vision to Catholic Youth Ministry in their *Renewing the Vision* document. In this session we will be unpacking that document and looking specifically at the essential components to a vibrant, effective approach to parish ministry for young people. We will also be looking at the newest document, *Listen, Teach, Send*, and the three-part framework it offers.

Personal Spirituality and the Call to Holiness

“All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 121). However, we remain unable to witness to a love which we are not willing to experience daily. Therefore, this session focuses on our need for conversion and a personal relationship with Christ, because fruit in ministry flows from the depths of this interior life.

FOUNDATION 102

Understanding Your Role/Position

Many Directors of Youth Ministry begin their jobs with the pre-conceived notion that all they will be doing is ministry with young people, when in reality, their job description is something a bit different. This session is to help the DYM fully understand their role and position and the difference of being a DYM vs. being a YM.

Building a Youth Ministry Team

Have you ever heard the phrase, “it takes a village”? This is the same concept. It takes a village to help young people grow in holiness and in relationship with Christ. You cannot do it alone. You need a team. Young people need as many adults as possible in their lives leading them, guiding them, and being examples of holiness and virtue.

Budget, Calendar, Events

Everything costs money. From booking a speaker for an event down to the paperclips we use to hold our notes together. Whether there is a budget already established from the parish or there is no budget, this session will help aid with the process of creating one and sticking to it through the year. This session will also help in creating a calendar of events and ministry days.

Methods and Skills for Youth Ministry

This session looks at some of the practical skills that should be in every DYMs toolkit. It covers the ecclesial method, retreat, and semester planning, how to give talks and run small groups effectively.

THEOLOGY FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Salvation History / The Story

From the earliest times of her missionary and catechetical activity the Church has placed great importance of telling the Story of God's amazing works throughout history as the foundation for understanding the Gospel and growing in faith. From with the creation of the world, continuing through the His covenants with Israel, Christ's fulfillment of the New Covenant, to the life of the Church. Throughout the pages of history God has been working to bring people to Himself. This session looks at the story of the people of God as that which invites us to say "yes" to Christ and join ourselves to His Church. This is the Good News! And this must be the foundation for all catechesis and the context in which all doctrine is taught.

The Deposit of Faith: Scripture and the CCC

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ..." (CT 5). This session looks at ways to insert teens into the Deposit of Faith through Scripture and the Catechism. Or in the words of the Catechism "The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends" (CCC 25).

The Mission of the Church

"Evangelization is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize." (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 14) This session unpacks into the richness of the Great Commission and identifies the key components of the missionary activity, including the tasks of evangelization and catechesis. The richness of the process of evangelization is detailed by looking at the catechumenate as the ideal model for all catechesis.

Effective Catechesis

Grounding in the *General Directory for Catechesis* and *Catechesi Tradendae*, this session looks at catechesis as a deepening of our initial evangelization. It will emphasize the Christocentric nature of catechesis, and the aims and tasks of catechesis.

The Liturgical Nature and Sacramental Life of the Church

This session will outline the Church's purpose and understanding of liturgy in light of God's plan of salvation. It will help youth workers form teens in a Catholic identity by fostering a connection with Christ in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This session offers practical suggestions for helping teens participate in the liturgy, most especially to see the Eucharist as the "source and summit" of their lives.

The Basics of Catholic Morality

This session reviews the basic principles of Catholic morality and shows how these are rooted in the Person of Jesus. Discussing the major moral issues teens face today can be a great opportunity for them to see how God desires their happiness and fulfillment. At the same time there are many aspects in the modern worldview that challenge the path offered to us by Christ. This session looks at the importance of teaching about morality as the authentic response to the love offered to each of us in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Theology of the Body for Young People

This session will cover the foundation of Catholic teaching about human sexuality by outlining John Paul II's theology of the body. It will also look at "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family" by the Pontifical Council for the Family. This concludes with practical examples of teaching sexuality to teens in a youth ministry setting.

Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Francis teaches us that, "Faith does not draw us away from the world or prove irrelevant to the concrete concerns of the men and women of our time... Faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God, in His love, and thus sheds light on the art of building; as such it becomes a service to the common good" (Lumen Fidei 51). This session will introduce and explain what some authors have called the *Church's best kept secret*: the Catholic Social Tradition. Often misunderstood, the Church's social teaching is *not* a partisan platform, and economic policy, or a political position, but rather an *integral part* of proclaiming and living the good news of Jesus Christ. We will present the social gospel in this context and demonstrate how this aspect of Church teaching can help evangelize, console, and lovingly challenge those the youth worker seeks to teach.

YOUTH MINISTRY SKILLS

Adolescent Development

This session focuses on the psychological make-up of contemporary adolescents in order to contribute to a holistic understanding of human nature. Further, by examining the role adolescence plays in the process of development, we are able to support the formation of emotionally and morally integrated disciples of Christ.

Pastoral Care with Teens

This session articulates the youth ministry should play in the development of adolescent's identity through faith and in the development of self-esteem based on real qualities of character. It will also provide guidance for how to handle typical crises in the life of an adolescent, pastoral and professional interventions, and the crucial distinction between counseling and ministry.

Engaging Youth Culture

“Go, therefore, to all nations...” (Matthew 28:18) At the Great Commission, Jesus commanded the Apostles to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. In order to be effective, they had to learn how to preach the message in people in different cultures and we must do the same to the culture of youth. Bl. Paul VI wrote “What matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots).” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 20). This session focuses on both understanding youth culture and practical ways to engage its very roots.

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization

“So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to proclaim the message, with power to drive out devils.” (Mark 3:13-14) The theme of discipleship is strong in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document called *Renewing the Vision*. This workshop looks at what discipleship entails and what it means to help teens be not just a *follower* of Christ, but a *disciple* of Christ. And through helping teens become disciples of Christ, we help them along this path of companionship with Christ both now and to eternity.

Incarnational & Relational Ministry

The Letter to the Hebrews begins “At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time, the final days, he has spoken to us in the person of his Son...” (Heb 1:1-2). The Second Person of the Trinity becoming flesh and dwelling among us is a radical act of encounter that is personal and in the world of the other. This is the inspiration for “incarnational ministry” which must be at the very foundation of our efforts to reach teens. To use the words of St. John Bosco, it is not enough that we love youth, they must know they are loved. This session looks at how to do this safely and effectively in the current culture.

Fostering Service Leadership and Vocation

The goal of youth ministry is to form young people as disciples of Christ. As young people mature in both their relationship with Christ and the Church, this means responding courageously in vocation and leadership. We will discuss how to till the soil for generosity in decision-making that comes a bit further down the road and how create an environment that empowers youth to serve through Christian leadership today.

Intercultural Ministry with Youth

What does it mean to serve in a diverse parish? Ethnic diversity has always been at the *heart* of the Church, “Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.” (Colossians 3:11) This session explores how to navigate the multicultural reality that many youth programs experience so that *all* teens feel a part of the Body of Christ. In doing so, fostering a *respect* for the dignity of each person, and honoring the pivotal importance of *family culture*, become key highlights in any successful ministry approach.