



A Resource for Parish Development of Young Adult Ministry



*If you would like someone from the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis to come to your parish and talk to parish staff, pastoral council or interested adults, please contact us at the Pastoral Center or email us.*

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# What is Young Adult Ministry?

Young adults are seeking answers to the deepest questions at the heart of our spiritual journey. Your parish is challenged to provide those answers in dialogue with young adults through outreach that is clear, charitable and open to complex conversation.

Ministry to young adults spans many important phases: college life, career transition, marriage and the beginning of parenthood. The age range of young adults is from 18-40, so there is no “one-size fits all” ministry and young adult ministry is not a “youth group” for young adults. Young adult ministry works best when it meets certain needs within the framework of the parish, such as a young parent’s group or a service and social justice-based group. The most important goal of Young Adult Ministry is to integrate the young adults of your community into the life, mission and work of your parish and the Catholic Church.

Within the young adult phase of life, you will also encounter a variety of generations. You may find that Millennials are very different from those at the tail end of Generation X as well as those who are members of Generation Z, also known as the iGeneration; It’s important to understand the mindset of those various generations to create meaningful programming.



Engaging in ministry for

Young  
Adults

### **Which “circumstances” fit your parish?**

Initiatory phase: You know there are young adults in your parish but currently there is no effort to gather them together for formation or fellowship. You would like to offer a few small activities for fellowship and worship and maybe gather a few young adult leaders

Entrepreneurial phase: You have been trying to jumpstart young adult ministry for 6 mos-a year. You’ve gathered a few leaders and have identified young adults and communicated. You want to build a more vibrant young adult ministry

Growth phase: You have 1 to 2 years of young adult ministry experience with a solid leadership core, pastoral support and parish recognition. Young adults from your parish are beginning to get involved regionally and you want to expand opportunities

Sustainability phase: 2 or more years experience leading efforts in your parish. The leadership is well established and now you need to consider how it will sustain itself as participants age out

# Effective Young Adult Outreach



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Word</b></p>      | <p><b>To Connect Young Adults with Jesus Christ</b></p> <p>Opportunities for spiritual formation such as prayer /adoration evenings connected with a speaker</p> <p>Consider an evangelization program such as Discovering Christ or Alpha, just for young adults</p> <p>Advertisement of regional Theology on Tap and like events</p>                  |
| <p><b>Worship</b></p>   | <p><b>To connect Young Adults with the Church</b></p> <p>Meeting at Mass with fellowship to follow</p> <p>A special Mass with fellowship connected</p> <p>Lenten or Advent retreat experiences</p> <p>Options for families with young children to pray and connect</p>  |
| <p><b>Service</b></p>   | <p><b>To connect young adults with the mission of the church in the world</b></p> <p>Invitation to ministry and committees that are action-oriented</p> <p>Days of service or Service “date nights”</p> <p>Summer service trips for youth home from college</p> <p>Opportunities for young families to learn about social justice on a family level</p> |
| <p><b>Community</b></p> | <p><b>To connect young adults with a peer community</b></p> <p>Gatherings of college students on breaks</p> <p>Gatherings of young parents with babysitting provided</p> <p>Gatherings of singles</p> <p>A place to accompany young adults and provide mentorship</p>   |

*Characteristics of Effective Outreach: When do you know your young adult ministry is succeeding?!*

- 1. Young adults are regularly attending Mass and have claimed leadership roles within the parish community*
- 2. Young adults are connected to a parish that supports them and invites participation in the wider parish community*
- 3. There is a clear structure in the parish that seeks to address the diverse needs of young adults*
- 4. Opportunities for engaged catechesis and spiritual formation are available*
- 5. Young adults are challenged to think with the mind of the Church.*
- 6. Outreach to young adults has a consistent focus*



## Surveying Your Parish

Questions to consider:

- ♦ *Is my community a college town? Are there college-aged young adults in my area?*
- ♦ *Is there an influx of young adults home during college break?*
- ♦ *Are youth ministry alum still in the area?*
- ♦ *Are young adults involved in helping in youth ministries?*
- ♦ *Does the area attract young professionals?*
- ♦ *Do I live in an area with a military population?*
- ♦ *Are weddings and baptisms a frequent occurrence?*
- ♦ *Is there a group of young adults being left out and in need of ministry?*

*Young Adult Population:*

*18-39*

*Single/Married/Married with Children/Divorced*

*College-aged/20 somethings/young families*

*Cradle Catholics/Converts/Low commitment and high commitment Catholics/  
Seekers*

*Outreach needs to happen in the parish, where young adults gather and digitally/  
social media*

*How can Young Adults take part in ministries already in place?*

***Easy Start up ideas:***

*Holy Hour*

*Low commitment social event*

*Attendance at a Diocesan event*

*Moms or Dads playgroup*

***Format suggestions:***

*Keep it to under two hours*

*Be consistent with date and times*

*Do not cancel*

*Provide babysitting as needed*

*Don't be a youth minister to young adults...encourage leadership*

*Connect with area parishes*

*Theology on tap license*



# Steps to Success



1. Identify young adults in your parish. Within that population, identify key young adults who will be evangelizers that will invite and welcome other young adults. For example, go through the baptisms of the last four years to begin a young parents ministry or seek out your Hands of Christ recipients to plan a gathering of college-age young adults and encourage them to invite others.
2. Educate the staff and key parish leaders about the need to create and maintain young adult ministry; it is not the job of one!
3. Extend personal invitations to young adults
4. Assess the parish culture and make appropriate adaptations to create a young adult friendly environment (i.e. increase your online presence, update your crying room/children's chapel or include mentorship for young married couples in your pre-cana and post-cana ministries.
5. Consider themes such as discernment, balance of work and family life, marriage and vocation in occasional homilies.
6. Host a social event for young adults to meet each other. Young adults today connect to your parish in the following order  
"BELONG, BEHAVE, BELIEVE." Provide them with a welcoming community that will lead, eventually, to deeper discipleship..



## Websites:

- Diocese of Rochester Young Adult Ministry

<https://oec.dor.org/young-adult-ministry/>

- USCCB Young Adult Ministry

<https://www.usccb.org/topics/youth-and-young-adult-ministries/young-adult-ministry>

- Busted Halo

<https://bustedhalo.com/>

- Faithful Citizenship

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/>

- Discovering Christ

<https://christlife.org/>

