



Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN
310 PROSPECT PARK WEST ♦ BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11215
TELEPHONE 718.281.9544 ♦ FAX 718.788.4877

SO, BE BOLD!

A PASTORAL PLAN FOR OUTREACH TO YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

Overview

The Diocese of Brooklyn has a rich, long history of catechizing and evangelizing youth and young adults. It is necessary, then, that under the leadership of Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, and in collaboration with the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis, we present this Plan that will unify, engage, and mobilize our pastoral and catechetical outreach to youth and young adults. This Diocesan Plan provides a framework which is flexible and practical. It is meant to be studied and implemented by the pastor, the Parish staff, the Parish youth and young adult team, and other collaborators. The family is an essential part of this outreach.

Catholic Youth

On May 15, 2018, Bishop DiMarzio and the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis gathered priests, deacons, men and women in consecrated life, and lay leaders for a special Youth Ministry Convocation. During this gathering, Bishop DiMarzio stressed the need for a specific plan to coordinate all of the outreach to youth and young adults, for both those Parishes involved in the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative (CYMI) and those who are not yet part of the CYMI. This Plan flows from remarks by Archbishop Pierre Christophe, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, during the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Diocesan Celebration of the V Encuentro held at St. John's University on April 28, 2018, where he says:

At the conclusion of Saint John's Gospel (John 21:1-14), the Apostles were again fishing and hadn't caught anything. The Risen Lord told them to cast their nets, and they caught one hundred fifty-three large fish. With the Lord Jesus, all things are possible. The mission is daunting, but it is our mission: to make sure that "the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and

September 18, 2018

minds of all who encounter Jesus” (EG, 1). That is Pope Francis’ dream for the Church – right here in Brooklyn, and he wants this to be your dream too. So, be bold! Be creative! And put out into the deep!

SIX GOALS

Five goals have been identified and form the foundation for the Catholic Youth Evangelization and Catechesis portion of this Plan. Five of these goals are found in *The Joy of Adolescent Catechesis* on page 14.

1. Empower parents and faith-filled families
2. Create vibrant, youth-friendly Parishes
3. Form fruitful partnerships
4. Engage in comprehensive ministry to youth with intentional and systematic faith formation
5. Develop an environment of inclusion, trust, and acceptance

An additional goal has been added:

6. Recognize Confirmation preparation as an integral part of a comprehensive approach to youth ministry (Confirmation is not graduation!)

IMPLEMENTATION

The people who comprise your Parish youth and young adult outreach team, or one that will be formed, will no doubt bring ideas and enthusiasm to this planning and implementation process. Below are several recommended ways to implement the goals of this Plan:

1. Empower parents and faith-filled families
 - a. encourage families to participate in all appropriate activities
 - b. provide opportunities for clergy and Parish staff to meet with parents and youth
 - c. provide adult-friendly faith formation in connection with youth-centered catechesis
 - d. recognize families who provide outstanding service and leadership to the Parish and/or Diocese
 - e. support and encourage participation in small faith sharing groups that have been established or establish small faith sharing groups to unite families and empower parents
 - f. ask parents how they wish to be involved in Parish life and outreach to youth
2. Create vibrant, youth friendly Parishes
 - a. celebrate achievements by youth and families
 - b. contemplate ways to make the Parish a central focus of family life
 - c. participate in programs and processes offered by the Diocese of Brooklyn (i.e. Strong Catholic Families)
 - d. ensure that the Parish is a welcoming community

3. Form fruitful partnerships
 - a. provide listening sessions to increase collaboration among all Parish societies and organizations; What do people need to do to “get along”?
 - b. invite leaders of the Parish Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), youth formation team, Confirmation preparation team, etc. to regular staff meetings
 - c. connect with recognized outside agencies that provide resources for youth and their families
 - d. encourage parents and other family members to be involved in programs and processes for youth
4. Engage in comprehensive ministry to youth with intentional and systematic faith formation
 - a. create an environment where parents and parishioners understand that formal religious education does not end with Confirmation, but rather continues throughout one’s life; each Parish (or group of Parishes) should seriously consider starting religious education programs for students in grades 9 to 12 if they do not already exist
 - b. collaborate with other Parishes in the deanery or area regarding catechesis for and outreach to youth in grades 6 to 8 and 9 to 12
 - c. insure that the Parish has a sufficient number of appropriately trained catechists to minister in the programs for grades 6 to 8 and 9 to 12
 - d. use recognized and approved resources for intentional and systematic faith formation (i.e. USCCB approved textbooks, Fr. Spitzer’s *Credible Catholic* online resources, etc.)
 - e. start or enhance programs of religious education for students in grades 6 to 8 and 9 to 12
 - f. attend national and international conventions which provide valuable resources for full programs of religious education (kindergarten through grade twelve)
5. Develop an environment of inclusion, trust, and acceptance
 - a. provide opportunities for youth to share achievements and dreams with the Parish
 - b. work closely with parents and family members to form a community of faith
 - c. recognize outstanding efforts of individuals and/or groups of youth
 - d. permit youth to plan and conduct events whenever appropriate
 - e. lead by your example; show that youth can be accepted and trusted
6. Recognize Confirmation preparation as an integral part of a comprehensive approach to youth ministry (Confirmation is not graduation!)
 - a. make preparation for each Sacrament a total Parish responsibility
 - b. invite youth to offer suggestions for Confirmation preparation activities
 - c. make use of approved and well-received Confirmation resources (i.e. Decision Point by Dynamic Catholic)
 - d. never permit preparation for Confirmation to be seen as an end to faith formation (Confirmation IS NOT graduation!)

THE CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY INITIATIVE (CYMI)

A notable opportunity arose in the Diocese of Brooklyn in 2012, when the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative (CYMI) was collaboratively established by the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation (now the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis) and the Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens to provide Parishes with financial support related to hiring a professionally trained youth minister and resources were made available to provide initial and ongoing formation for the youth minister and the youth ministry team. As of 2018, 96 Parishes in Brooklyn and Queens are part of the CYMI. In addition, many Parishes offer opportunities for young people to participate in the life of the Parish and community.

RESOURCES

Many excellent resources assist in the work of evangelizing and catechizing our young people, their parents, family members, and those who aid in their education and formation. The Secretariat compiled a list of approved and recommended resources that assist in the implementation of the six goals identified in this Plan:

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's (USCCB's) Strong Catholic Families Initiative
- RENEW International's ARISE/LEVÁNTATE and Why Catholic?
- Fr. Spitzer's Credible Catholic Initiative
- USCCB's High School Curriculum Framework--<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/upload/high-school-curriculum-framework.pdf>

To assemble our diocesan plan, we drew on the research found in these documents:

- *The Joy of Adolescent Catechesis*, A Publication of the Partnership on Adolescent Catechesis, 2017
- *The Art of Forming Young Disciples*, Everett Fritz, Sophia Institute Press, 2018
- *Renewing the Vision*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997

Links to additional resources including videos, events, courses, workshops, conventions, etc. are available on our web page www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org to assist in the implementation of the goals. In addition, the staff of the Secretariat will regularly provide opportunities to address issues related to the three phases noted at the start of this plan.

Catholic Young Adults

INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis urged young adults “not to let the world be ruined by those without scruples, who only think about exploiting it and destroying it.” Instead, he said, they should “flood the places where you live with the joy and enthusiasm typical of your youthful age, to irrigate the world and history with the joy that comes from the Gospel, from having met a person: Jesus, who has enthralled you and has drawn you to be with Him.”

The *National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults* provides the three key goals:

1. unity in the fields of youth and young adults
2. engagement through direct dialogue with young people
3. mobilization of the Parish towards implementation of goals and objectives

Outreach to young adults is different in many ways from outreach to youth, primarily because there exists so many different groups of people who make up this particular family within the larger family of the Church.

WHO ARE YOUNG ADULTS?

The website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) posts the following:

Young adults are persons in their late teens, twenties, and thirties who represent diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, educational, vocational, social, political, and spiritual backgrounds. They are college students, workers, and professionals; they are persons in military service; they are single, married, divorced, or widowed; they are with or without children; they are newcomers in search of a better life.

"There are many opportunities to touch the lives of young adults, and these should be seen as moments for evangelizing outreach. Some of these may require a change in the way we approach evangelization so our outreach is more dynamic, taking the Church into the community where young adults gather rather than waiting for these men and women to come to us." -*Sons and Daughters of the Light* The following link is to the USCCB's document on Young Adults entitled *Sons and Daughters of Light*: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/young-adults/sons-and-daughters-of-light.cfm>

PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES

In addition to the opportunities already in place for young adults (i.e. Theology on Tap, Grilling with God, Mass for Young Adults, days and evenings of reflection), which often include events and Masses in nearby areas other than Brooklyn and Queens, the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis provides additional opportunities for catechetical and spiritual growth for all young adults; those single, married, married with children, divorced, widowed, etc. On the local level, pastors and others should reach out directly to the Secretariat staff for assistance in program building and/or enhancement. The web site www.meetmein.church contains valuable information regarding Masses, events, and other opportunities for young adults.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Outreach to young adults continues to grow and prosper here in the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens, thanks to all who assist Bishop DiMarzio in this most important work of the Church. Each Parish is called to study and implement the various aspects of this plan, according to the particular needs of the young adults and the Parish. Acknowledging that even the best plan falls short of reaching all the intended goals, the priority is “to put out into the deep.” As we think about our next steps, let’s recall Archbishop Pierre’s advice to us, **“SO, BE BOLD!”**

The people who comprise your Parish youth and young adult outreach team will no doubt bring ideas and enthusiasm to the planning and implementation process. Below are several recommended ways to implement the goals of this Plan:

Goal One: Unity in the fields of youth and young adult outreach

The Parish should:

- a. create an atmosphere of education and formation for all young adults
- b. use appropriate resources for regularly schedule and organized catechetical instruction (see list provided above and at www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org)
- c. follow established protocols and Diocesan guidelines for safe environment, instruction, and formation
- d. establish or continue supporting a Parish Youth and Young Adult Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Board
- e. make available all information regarding Diocesan and Parish events and initiatives

Goal Two: Engagement through direct dialogue with young people

The Parish should:

- a. provide opportunities for groups to gather for direct dialogue with Parish leaders
- b. train Parish leaders to listen to the particular needs of young adults

September 18, 2018

- c. encourage and participate in leadership training for small faith sharing groups specifically designed for young adults
- d. organize and encourage events where young people have the chance to formally and informally share their thoughts and desires
- e. provide and encourage opportunities for young adults to become members of Parish advisory boards, where appropriate

Goal Three: Mobilization of the Parish towards implementation

The Parish should:

- a. establish appropriate networks within the Parish that make use of the talents of young adults
- b. create regularly scheduled opportunities for family catechesis and multi-generational catechesis
- c. promote and fund attendance at conferences and events that promote young adult involvement in the local, Diocesan, and universal Church
- d. collaborate closely with the Diocese of Brooklyn's Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and other Diocesan offices and agencies
- e. look beyond the ordinary and move to the extraordinary; don't be limited by past negative experiences
- f. invite all parishioners to share thoughts on young adult outreach and seek parishioner support and encouragement
- g. don't fear small numbers; Jesus began with 12