

PREVIEW
EDITION

A FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR
YOUTH MINISTRY IN IRELAND

**Called Together.
Making The Difference. ►►**





synopsis

Read all about it...

this leaflet has been put together to tell you about a newly available booklet that discusses some valuable opportunities and resources that the Church can offer young people in their lives today.

Growing up is a challenge. Dealing with personal changes, choices and pressure can be bewildering. Throw in the distractions of a dramatically changing world and the scenario can quickly become seriously daunting. But young people don't have to face these hurdles alone.

Called Together. Making the Difference suggests ways in which the Catholic Church in Ireland can:

- Accompany and guide young people through the complexities of life.
- Encourage young people to become more aware of the spiritual and more trusting of their faith.
- Help them make good decisions and take the most rewarding paths.
- Help them understand what it means to have faith.
- Show them how to get involved in Church life and how to live by and learn from the teachings of Jesus.

This youth ministry is achieved one-to-one and via a multitude of group activities and events coordinated by trained youth ministers. It's their aim to help young people grow both personally and spiritually.

Called Together. Making the Difference offers a recommended framework for how youth ministry should be carried out into the future. The booklet has been written by experienced youth ministers who welcome your thoughts and opinions. Releasing the gifts of young people will make a real difference in Church, society and the world at large.



The following pages provide a brief

In the first chapter we touch upon the specific aims of the booklet: who it's written for, what can be learned from it and how it should encourage ongoing discussion about youth ministry rather than act as the final word on the subject. We talk of Christ's intention to offer fullness of life to all people, especially the young, who have the enquiring minds and growing maturity with which to consider the Gospel message.

Ireland today

Next we discuss what it means to be a young person in contemporary Ireland. Religious practices may well have taken a back seat and so we discuss how a life of faith, and an active involvement with the Church, can be exciting, thought-provoking, sociable and strengthening. A reassuring island of solidness in a sea of uncertainty and mixed messages.

Some young people may have a strong yearning for meaningful experiences which can bring a sense of truth to their lives. But there's an increasing movement away from traditional definitions of spirituality and religion, and a tendency to no longer view the Church as an authoritative figure. The booklet emphasises why it's important to identify these emerging trends in order to have a greater understanding of young people's perception of religion and their general outlook on life.

Attention is drawn to the changes which ministry with young people has undergone throughout the years – both negative and positive; the importance

of implementing professional child and youth safeguarding procedures is especially highlighted. And we're reminded that the role of excellent youth ministers remains constant; part of that role is to listen with patience and respect so that a connection of trust can be made.

Going for goal

Next we look at the four goals of youth ministry – what the Church hopes to achieve when ministering to young people.

Goal One To help young people grow, both in a personal sense and a spiritual sense.

Goal Two To give young people the opportunity to experience and be disciples of Jesus Christ in their lives.

Goal Three To inspire and facilitate young people to take an active role in the Catholic community.

Goal Four To encourage the Catholic community to continually put aside any prejudices about young people and to recognise and empower their talents and energy.

We then outline where youth ministry can take place: in the home, school or college, the parish and diocese, Catholic movements and other youth groups that aren't specifically Catholic.

In each of these places, or settings, there are perceived benefits and difficulties when ministering to young people. The booklet discusses why it's important that the adults who live and work within each of these settings should communicate with, and support, young people.

But, as is pointed out, it's only with the effort of the entire Church community i.e.



overview of the new booklet

the individuals and groups from each setting, that really successful youth ministry can take place. Every member of the Church community is responsible for – and in turn will reap the rewards of caring for – the young people of the community.

Recipe for success

Next up for examination are the specific subjects or ministries that youth ministers should focus on during their time with young people (known as the elements). We then look at the ways in which they should carry this out (known as the themes). There are eight elements in total. A good balance of the eight elements is highly recommended. In brief, the eight elements consist of:

- 1 Advocacy** Encouraging young people to stand up for others in need.
- 2 Justice and Service** Encouraging them to protect the life and rights of others and to be people of service in the world we live in.
- 3 Community Life** Welcoming young people and making them feel valued and cared for.
- 4 Evangelization** Inviting and helping them to experience God in their lives.
- 5 Catechesis** Teaching young people about the scriptures, Catholic traditions and a life of faith in order to deepen their relationship with Jesus.
- 6 Leadership Development** Inspiring them to recognise and use their own gifts so that they can in turn help others around them.
- 7 Pastoral Care** Promoting healthy development but giving special attention to those young people who feel lost.
- 8 Prayer and Worship** Celebrating and strengthening their relationship with Jesus.

The eight themes pinpoint what is necessary for successful ministry, any precautions that should be noted and any particular measures that can help make the process more beneficial for all. In brief, the eight themes consist of:

- 1 Effective Leadership** Describing the attributes which are sought in youth ministers and which should be encouraged in those to whom they minister.
- 2 Safety** Being aware of the professional boundaries that should be adhered to when working with young people.
- 3 Developmentally Appropriate** Providing activities that are suitable for the needs of those being ministered to.
- 4 Creative, Participative, Adaptable and Fun Programming** Making sure that learning is enjoyable.
- 5 Family Friendly** Reaching out to the families of those who are being ministered to.
- 6 Intergenerational** Encouraging relationships between the old, the young and those in between.
- 7 Fostering Catholic Identity in a Multicultural Environment** Promoting respect for other people and cultures.
- 8 Community-wide Collaboration** Working with non faith-based groups.





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Time for action

In the next chapter several action points are suggested. There are numerous steps that need to be taken, not just to protect young people, but also to provide support for the youth ministers, whether they be full-time, part-time, paid workers or volunteers.

We look in detail at the common principles that apply when carrying out any youth ministry work, in any setting. In formal settings the need for a team of committed adults is identified, along with someone who can coordinate the process. It's also important that those involved in youth ministry should work in partnership

with others. Child safeguarding should be in place, as well as sound recruitment policies; and there should be accredited training schemes available and mentors provided. Strategic planning and finance are other areas that need consideration.

Practical points

An additional section at the back of the booklet offers further insight into youth ministry.

The importance of diocesan youth ministry is discussed. When it's successful it can provide a solid foundation for youth ministry in the local parishes and it is





clear that in each Irish diocese, a well-trained diocesan youth ministry team and coordinator are very necessary.

Recommendations are outlined for ensuring the ongoing success of youth ministry in the parish. For example, by listening to the concerns of young people, providing a well-trained parish youth ministry team and coordinator in each Irish parish, and being well organised in order to implement plans effectively. This is followed by a very detailed job description for a parish youth ministry coordinator.

A vision for successful youth ministry in education, at both 2nd and 3rd levels, is outlined. And a need for increased cooperation between youth ministers in these settings is emphasised.

A brief outline is given of a vision for youth ministry in Catholic organisations. The need for a spirit of partnership between different organisations is made clear. Some questions that parishes, dioceses and other church agencies may wish to discuss are suggested. Finally, we hear the opinions and thoughts of various Catholic young people on the subject of their contribution to the Church and their definition of Good News.

There's also a section giving details of the publications and other material



referred to in the booklet, as well as a useful selection of suggested further reading in a comprehensive bibliography.

Youth is a time of growth, a time of discovery, a time of change. *Called Together. Making the Difference* provides a fresh starting point from which youth ministers can continue to guide and support young people and ensure the lines of communication between generations remain open, both ways.

Light up and lead the way, but listen too – together we will make the difference.



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