

Eight focus points of comprehensive youth ministry

The term “Comprehensive Youth Ministry” means planning for and supporting a holistic ministry aimed at youth and young adults. The comprehensive approach recognises where parishes are at and helps them to look ahead, to celebrate what they are doing now and to develop new possibilities for the future.

The eight focus points are: Leadership Development, Catechesis, Personal Growth and Care (Pastoral Care), Prayer and Spiritual Growth, Active Support (Advocacy), Justice and Service, Community Life and Outreach (Evangelisation). Often some of these components are being offered by other parts of the Parish so it’s good to link in to what is already being offered.

These eight focus points are an effective planning aid, when planning events and activities for the youth of your Parish. This document offers some suggestions as to what types of actions, activities or events you could do. One thing to note is that often you may find that certain activities could come under more than one focus point for example, participation in the Mass could come under leadership development, catechesis and prayer and spiritual growth. This adds to that holistic ministering to young people.

**Leadership development**

Leadership development is Parishes encouraging and enabling youth and young adults to take on leadership roles within the parish, also providing and sourcing opportunities for leadership formation for the youth.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

* Young people leading games/prayer – peer ministry
* Hold a youth retreat/camp
* Attend Diocesan training seminar
* Developing fellowship within a team
* Formation as Ministers of Word/Eucharistic Ministers/Altar Servers
* Young people participating in the Mass as Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Musicians, Collectors, Commentators etc.
* Parishioners encouraging youth to “step out of their comfort zones”
* Attend CIT or other relevant training
* Participation as youth rep on parish committees (liturgy, Parish Council etc)
* Youth taking responsibilities in the parish (eg collectors, counters, hospitality ministers etc)
* Funds made available by the parish to send youth on external camps, courses
* Youth leaders taking children’s liturgy
* Funds made available to buy resources eg youth ministry books, DVDs etc
* A network of adults that can mentor/formally support the youth
* Discussion groups
* Simulation games
* Planning and hosting a Youth Mass
* Involving young people in the decision-making processes in the life of the parish
* Young people forming/co-ordinating/running youth group meetings.

**Personal Growth and Care**

Personal growth and care is promoting and supporting positive youth development. Affirming young people for their gifts and supporting them in their difficulties. Often the main concern for teens is who they are and whether they fit into a group. It’s important to celebrate and accept each person as an individual.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

* Be available to listen to members when they need to talk (and sometimes you need to be available to listen to parents too).
* Have the parish priest or another adult spend an evening with the youth and talk through issues that face young people as they grow older.
* Form a prayer group.
* Organise life skills classes.
* Organise a parish retreat.
* Have people speak at youth nights about their occupation and about the type of training needed to get that occupation.
* Have young people involved in parish leadership.
* Challenge youth to be outside their comfort zone eg being “blind” for an hour
* Learn something new
* Budgeting
* Calligraphy – *fancy writing*
* Communication skills
* Cultural exchange
* Does someone from your parish have a skill or hobby that they can teach to your group?
* Everyone has to teach the group a new skill or idea or trick
* Find out about another religion
* Going away for a weekend for an adventure camp together
* Guitar lessons/group
* Interview your parish priest or other people in the Parish
* Hear from a guest speaker
* Learning memory techniques
* Listening challenges
* Pilates
* Public speaking challenge
* Share your passion – each member shares a hobby or skill they are passionate about
* Team building challenges
* Time management games
* Trust walk / trust activities
* Wheelchair experience
* Yoga

**Community Life**

Community life is youth and young adults forming links with the wider community, through activities and events; peer socialising and being involved in and responding to issues within and beyond the faith community. Our youth shouldn’t only be thought of as the future of the church – they are in the Church now – what are we doing to keep them? Community life includes youth hanging out with other young people and making Catholic friends.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

* Form a youth and/or young adult group
* Organise a sports day
* Arrange for youth to host a concert or talent quest for the parish
* Invite the youth to host a cup of tea or a BBQ after Mass
* Arrange parish fairs/galas
* Join in celebration of other denominations
* Adventure race
* Baby photo sharing
* Back to front night
* Bad Taste night
* Beach trip
* BBQ
* Black and White night
* Bowling (lawn or ten pin)
* Brain Teasers/Memory Games
* Breakfast/Brunch party
* Bring-a-friend
* Camp
* Campfire
* Card night
* Christmas Party
* City visit
* Coffee at a café
* Darts night
* Day at the Beach
* Dessert evening
* Disco/social
* Drama
* Fancy dress party
* Farm visit
* Father’s Day Party
* Fish & Chips night
* Fly some kites
* Frisbee competition
* Games evening
* Go karting
* Grandparents day
* Horse riding
* Human pyramids
* Ice-skating
* Indoor cricket/netball
* International Night – each person picks a country & brings food from that country, wears clothing & teaches about that country
* Lego day
* Mid-winter Christmas
* Mid-winter swim
* Mini golf
* Mini Olympics
* Mother’s Day Party
* Movies or DVD night
* Music or movies in the park
* Music night
* Mystery tour
* Newcomers night
* Paintballing
* Pancake night / breakfast / brunch
* Pet day
* Picnic
* Pizza Night
* Pool night
* Pot luck dinner or Progressive Dinner
* Rock climbing
* Scavenger hunt
* Singstar
* Snow Planet
* Socials/dances with other youth groups
* Sports day or games – maybe with another youth group
* Themed Party / Meeting (often you can link this to the Church calendar)
* Train or bus trip
* Tramp with the Auckland Catholic Tramping Club (www.actc.org.nz)
* Visit another youth group or invite another group to your place
* Visit members’ homes
* What will I be doing in 2020?
* Who in your parish has an interesting job and would be willing to speak to your group?
* A wood carver
* Actor
* Arrange a visit to a workplace near your Church
* Go to a pizza place, talk to the staff, go into the kitchen and see how the pizza is made and taste the pizza
* Go to uni and watch a weekend lecture
* Hospitality industry
* Interpreters/diplomats
* Lawyer, Accountant, Manager
* MP
* Nursing, Police, Ambulance Officer
* Sign-language
* Somebody who works for a not-for-profit eg
* World Vision, Caritas etc
* Sports people
* Teacher/Lecturer
* Uni student talks about how uni differs from school
* Visit a radio station
* Visit to the fire station

**Outreach (Evangelisation)**

Outreach is involving and including young people from beyond the faith community and recognising the diversity of experiences and gifts that all young people have. It’s also really important to encourage members to reach out and bring friends and people who used to come to Church to youth group.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

* Youth Concert
* Ecumenical service with local churches
* Summer camp
* Help with a collection for a charitable agency
* Hold a youth day for your community
* Encourage a friend to come to Mass or youth group
* Organise an outreach camp
* Travelling Christmas carollers
* Hold a parish social
* Organise a sports day
* Organise a reunion for newly baptised/confirmed
* Invite another youth group to join you for an event/meeting
* Helping others in the community – show the face of Jesus eg organising a games session for children at Monte Cecelia or the local refuge, helping those in need with household chores and gardening
* Singing Christmas carols at the local shopping centre
* Singing songs for the elderly at a local rest home or hospital
* Find out about other faith groups in your community – what do you have in common – can you have a shared meeting/event?

**Active Support (Advocacy)**

Often as leaders we need to be the voice for our youth and young adults. Often they don’t feel like they have a voice in a parish community because they often don’t contribute financially to the parish. It is also important to give them the support and skills to be advocates themselves. Some parishioners may be uncomfortable around teens – what are they going to do, what are they going to say, why do they dress that way etc? As a youth minister you can help bridge that gap. Youth Ministry presents Jesus to the youth in a way they can understand and that is relevant to them.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

Research leadership structures in your parish and diocese

Arrange for a priest or other gifted person to be available for spiritual direction for the youth

Have a youth representative on the parish pastoral council

Involve young people in the parish community and ensure they have a voice at parish meetings, forums etc

Explore bi-culturalism in your Parish

Film night – check resources page for movies with a Christian message

Organise a debate

Personal development skills sessions such as public speaking, time management, listening skills, debating, planning

Seek out opportunities for young people to spend time with others in the community – building relationships will bridge any gaps

Encourage young people to get involved in parish ministry

Invite youth to participate in parish activities

Have a session on impromptu speaking

Show and Tell – each member brings an item that is important to them and explains what the item is and why it is important to them

Have an older person come and speak about their faith journey and what they learnt about their faith when they were a young Catholic. How has Church teaching changed over the years?

**Catechesis**

Teaching – passing on the faith. This is what ties together our ministry. Catechesis can be formal teaching or it can be informal “what does the Catholic Church have to say about what we are talking about right now?”

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

Arrange for a priest, professed religious or lay person with theology training to lead a catechesis session for your parish/group

Cafe catechesis

Theology on Tap

Catechesis lecture & questions led by a priest or other person with theology training

Watch for regional catechesis sessions and take your group to these

Listen to a podcast or DVD on Church teaching (check out 15 minutes with the Bishop at <http://station15.co.nz> and maybe use this as a discussion starter for your group).

Attend a seminar or lecture as a group

[www.xt3.com](http://www.xt3.com) is another place with lots of audio clips that you can use as a starter for a discussion session

Invite

* a priest to speak about a day in the life of a priest
* somebody to talk about what the Church teaches about Justice and peace (maybe somebody from the St Vincent de Paul Group in your parish)
* Somebody who has been a Missionary to speak?
* a married couple to speak on their vocation of marriage
* a priest to speak on his vocation
* a seminarian to speak about his preparation to be a priest
* a CDC student to talk about their experience of taking a year out to be with God

Research your Parish/Diocese – eg what is the motto of your Bishop, when did you Parish Church open etc?

Research or visit a religious order in your area

**Justice and Service**

Increasing awareness that we are not the only ones in the world – there are people less fortunate than us and we need to be a part of their lives. If we want the world to change – if the world is to practice justice and mercy – encourage the youth as they have the energy, the dreams and the time to change the world!

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

* Looking at Church documents on justice and peace
* Explore background to recent world events – what is our response as Christians to these events?
* Assist with Church service at local hospital (take patients to and from service)
* Cleaning graffiti in local area
* Collecting for the Women’s Refuge
* Cooking or baking (cookies, chocolates, cakes etc)
* Crafts eg make origami Easter baskets and put hand-made chocolates in them, making Christmas decorations, making a large poster and having kids from a refuge colour/paint the poster
* Do a collection for those in need eg pantry raid for St Vincent de Paul
* Do a fundraiser for a charity that your group would like to support
* Gold coin donation at each meeting – money collected goes to a charity that your group wants to support  
  Grocery Raid for the local food bank
* Speaker from Refugee Migrant Society (or furniture raid for RMS or refuge)
* Fundraising for a charity (sausage sizzle etc)
* **Fundraisers**
* Adventure Race
* Art show
* Auction event
* BBQ after Mass
* Cake sale
* Car wash
* Chocolate sale (or lollies etc)
* Coin chain
* Games night
* Fair or gala
* Fashion Show
* Movie night
* Organise a karaoke night
* Produce a concert or play and then sell tickets
* Quiz night
* Sales table after Mass (eg bake sale)
* Sausage sizzle
* Sell items donated on Trademe
* Walkathon
* Making sandwiches or soup for Night shelter (or some other group)
* Paint a mural for a community organisation
* Parish service – help out with cleaning, gardening etc in your Church or in parishioner homes
* Park volunteering | http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/outdoors/volunteer/default.asp
* Participate as a group in a fundraiser like World Vision 40 Hour Famine
* Planting trees on Motuihe | www.motuihe.org.nz
* Visit a rest home and chat to the elderly or sing some songs for them   
  Christmas carolling
* Volunteer at Zoo or SPCA
* Volunteer for a charity or assist as collectors for a public event like Concert in the Park or the Christmas Parade
* Young Vinnies
* What’s your environmental footprint?
* Invite somebody to speak from local community service groups eg St Vincent de Paul, Refuge, Red Cross

**Prayer and Worship**

One of the most important elements as this brings our members closer to Jesus through prayer and worship. It is very important that our youth feel welcome in the Church and the community.

Types of actions, activities or events you could do:

Adventure Race for places of faith

Adoration

Bible Quiz

Bible Scavenger Hunt

Bible study

Charades or Pictionary based on scripture

Children’s Liturgy – if your parish offers children’s liturgy invite youth group to assist as leaders

Clay modelling – listen to a bible reading and the invite young people to create a response from clay

Create a crossword using words from a reading (there are a number of online programs that let you make crosswords)

Create a song or jingle based on a piece of scripture

Creative Prayer | http://livingtheword.org.nz

Discussion evening – general like Catholic 101 or focused on the time of the Church year eg Pentecost, Lent, learn about a Saint etc

Discussion after Mass – discuss the readings/homily

Draw pictures on an abstract concept such as God, Happiness, Love, Your World or on a piece of scripture. For an interesting variation half way through the session instruct members to pass their art to the person sitting to their left to complete

Form small groups for regular discussion on Sunday readings

Learn about the Rosary

Make a banner that represents a bible passage or what your youth group stands for

Make a Youth Group candle

Newspaper prayer – youth cut words or sentences out that they would like to pray about – allow time for group sharing

Photography competition – take a theme from the bible and ask youth to capture this theme in a photo or other art form

Prepare on World Youth Day theme

Reflecting on Sunday readings | http://livingtheword.org.nz

Retreat

Sacramental programmes – invite youth group to assist in delivering preparation for younger children

Social Justice Discussion | www.caritas.org.nz

Start and/or finish meetings in prayer

Taize Prayer – arrange your own or join St Francis Retreat Centre – 1st Wednesday of the month

Theology of the Body

Theology on Tap (young adult groups)

Tramp/Walk

Treaty of Waitangi – what is our response as Catholics?

Write Prayers of the Faithful for a Sunday Mass

Youth Mass (attend Diocesan Youth Mass (usually the last Sunday of the month) or host your own Youth Mass)