



## Ideas on how to structure leadership of ministry to young people

*It takes a village to raise a child*

*It takes a parish or community to provide ministry to young people*

This document shares some of the more common models for ministry to young people that are operating well in the Auckland Catholic Diocese. We share these for the benefit of those who are looking to start or reorganise ministry to young people. ACYM would recommend that there is always an intergenerational team responsible for ministry to young people. Some of the core roles would be:

- **Programme Leaders:** Often young people in their teens or 20s who lead actual programmes. For some this is peer ministry (ministering to other people their own age) and for others this is leading programmes for people younger than themselves. These people are typically “up the front” leading activities, games, prayer, outreach activities etc.
- **Co-Ordinator of ministry:** This person’s job is truly coordinating. They ensure that the ministry leaders, volunteers, mentors and parish team/priest are all working together for the good of the young people. This person is often also the main advocate for ministry to young people. In some parishes this person would be the youth representative on the Parish Pastoral Council.
- **Co-ordinating team:** This group plans what ministry will look like. Often this group would set a theme for the semester/year. This group are responsible for planning the overall programme and make decisions about typical structure/content of a youth meeting, if and when camps/retreats will be held, identify resources that are required, identify and form/train leaders and volunteers for ministry.
- **Mentors:** This group are typically experienced adults who have a heart for ministry with young people. They may attend co-ordinating team meetings or they may meet individually or in small groups with leaders. They provide support and clarification for leaders. In some communities their role would reflect that of what would be expected of a spiritual director or supervisor.

On the following pages we share examples from some parishes and communities in the Auckland Diocese. We have intentionally not named these groups.

If you are setting up a new group or you would like advice on how to change the structure of your existing group please feel free to contact any one of the full-time team at ACYM:



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## Youth Ministry at Parish A

Parish A is an urban parish with predominantly Pacifica families and a smaller number of Filipino, Indian and Pakeha families. They see ministry as their “youth family” rather than “youth group”. The Youth Family meeting takes place every Friday evening during school semesters. Young people aged 8+ are welcome to attend. Typically 60-100 young people gather. Parents often stay and this is seen as an opportunity to build community. Programme leaders are aged 15 through to 25 years of age.

Their structure is:

- Volunteer Youth Ministry Co-Ordinator.
- Programme Leaders are young people aged 15 to 25 who plan and lead ministry on a Friday evening. These leaders are supported by members of the Core Group. New leaders are offered the opportunity to attend the Emmaus Leadership programme provided by ACYM each year. The parish also sends programme leaders to other events and training that would be beneficial for them eg Hearts Aflame and SetFree. The leaders who attend the Emmaus Programme are intentionally mentored in a partnership arrangement with a member of the Core Group and a member of the ACYM team.

- Core Group (co-ordinating team) comprises:

- eight youth leaders (programme leaders)
- Youth Ministry Co-Ordinator
- 6-8 adults who are supporting ministry to young people
- the priest responsible for ministry with young people

The Core Group meets once a month on a Sunday afternoon for 2-3 hours. They:

- are responsible for administration and governance of the group
- agree and promote an annual plan for ministry
- co-ordinates a roster of three key programme leaders taking responsibility for each Friday evening youth family meeting
- put guidelines and procedures in place and manage any exceptions to this
- arrange a meeting with parents at least once a semester to advise on theme for that semester, share on teachings that will be covered during the semester and advise key dates. At this meeting they also receive feedback and ideas from parents.
- Receive reports from subgroups within the core group. Each core group includes one adult and a number of programme leaders:
  - Finance
  - Communications
  - Health and safety/transport and activities
  - Music
  - Finance and fundraising
  - Spiritual development

## **Youth Ministry at Parish B**

Group number: 30+

Group ethnicity: mixed (Pacific Islanders, Indian, Maori) - parish youth are represented by six ethnic groups within the group

Group lead by

- President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (these are the main officers)
- we also have a Social Committee leader and a Spiritual Committee leader
- in the second year of the group running we appointed 5 future leaders (younger members of the youth) who work alongside the current officers in planning the year for the youth
- we have a deacon who represents the pastoral team and works with us to assist in spiritual guidance and decision making
- we have a support group- made up a Parish Council member, a few parents and a couple of other people who play a significant part in the parish

Together this committee ensures the smooth running of the youth, communication within and between groups is better because of the above structure.

Guidelines are set - simple but effective to assist the group

- officers to remain in their role for 2 years as a term
- funds raised for and by the group to be put into the bank account under the parish for the youth
- meetings to be held fortnightly for not more than an hour and a half at the most
- officers to meet with committee leaders, pastoral team, support group etc once a month to discuss issues, events etc.

The officers along with the future leaders meet at the start of the year over 3 weeks (once a week) to draft a skeleton plan for the year- this is presented to the youth at the very first meeting during which they all give feedback on what to add and take away.

Throughout the year as and when activities are due to happen, the spiritual or social committee appoint a mini committee to meet and plan the event, every youth member is given a chance during the year to be a part of a planning committee.

## Youth Ministry at Parish C

Parish C is a large urban parish with a diverse ethnic mix of Indian, Samoan, Tongan, Filipino and Pakeha. The parish has three Masses each weekend with one parish youth mass a month.

The Youth Co-Ordinator is a single woman in her 30s, who has been in youth ministry leadership roles since she was 18. The co-ordinator mentors five *leaders* who are all of university age (mainly 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students). Each of those leaders has one developing leader working with them.

Each *leader* has specific responsibilities:

- Planning and running monthly youth group meetings including some spiritual formation but also activities, games etc. Participants can choose which meetings they attend and which ones they skip.
- Spiritual formation. A large component of the ministry for this leader is running programmes like Theology of Body and Chosen. Participants wishing to attend these programmes must make a commitment that they will attend all sessions (unlike the youth group meetings where they can choose what they join).
- Preparing the monthly parish Youth Mass
- Communications and Social. This includes promoting upcoming events and programmes on Facebook, organising social outings and parties etc.
- Parish Pastoral Council. Responsibility for attending the PPC meeting often alternates between two leaders as they find it challenging attending such a formal meeting.

Each leader liaises with the parish office and others in official roles for what they are responsible for. All leader roles except for the Parish Pastoral Council representative have a developing leader working with them. Developing leaders begin with simple things and then step up over time. For example a developing leader working with the leader responsible for the parish Youth Mass might start by preparing and leading prayer before and after the Youth Mass practice. Over a period of time they would get to the point where they were running that area of ministry with the more experienced leaders being around to support.

Disadvantages of this model are that developing leaders can sometime find themselves leading people who are older than them and this can cause issues. There needs to be a path for the experienced leader to move into or the two need to collaborate when the developing leader becomes more experienced. Ministry then becomes team ministry rather than being led individually by a single leader. It can be helpful to set expectations at the outset rather than having to manage any hurt feelings at a later time.

Developing leaders are active and regular participants in the youth group who show initiative and an interest in joining this ministry. The co-ordinator is actively looking for these people. The values she looks for are that they are good at nurturing young people (patience and kindness), they have a real desire to lead youth ministry and most important that they genuinely like young people. The Youth Co-Ordinator talks to them about what is involved, the commitment required etc and gives them the opportunity to step into a developing leadership role. Parents of developing leaders must also support their selection. Developing leaders often need encouragement when things don't go according to their plan or when life is busy. The Youth Co-Ordinator befriends and stays in regular contact with parents.

In addition a young adults group meets monthly. Young adults who participate in this gathering are encouraged to help the youth leaders with administration and background duties like setting up food etc for youth group meetings. This makes leaders and developing leaders more available to spend time with the participants.

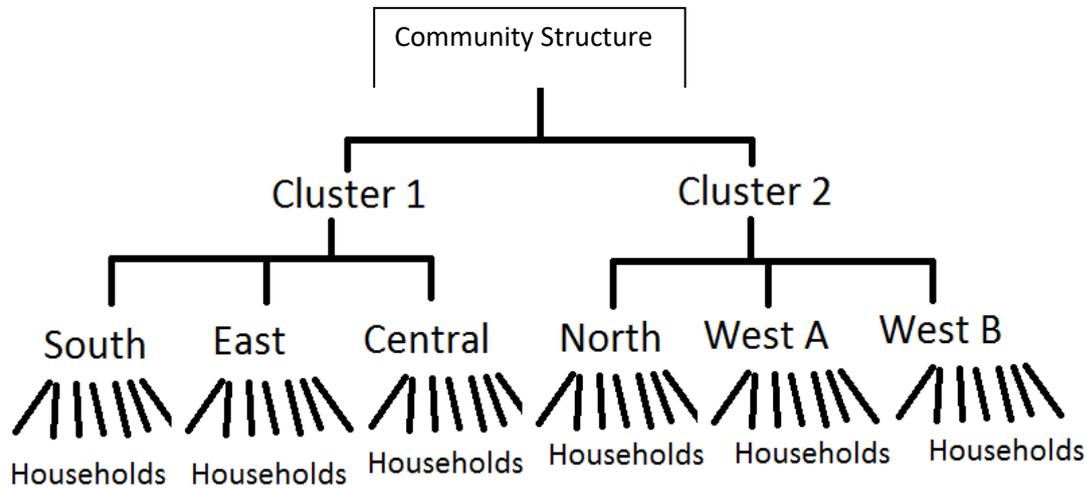
The Youth Co-Ordinator has a training/formation programme in place for both leaders and developing leaders.

- Developing leaders attend the ACYM Intro to Youth Ministry programme. This is seen as an invaluable starting point for the developing leaders. The “know your lemons” activity is a tool that the whole group of leaders refers back to regularly when talking about the importance of establishing authentic relationship.
- At the beginning of every year (before youth group meetings and other youth activities start) a 2 day leaders retreat is held away from the parish. The retreat comprises ½ day formation, ½ chilling, 1 day planning. This group uses the ACYM planner as an outline and then adds their own dates so that by the end of the retreat they have an annual planner and all leaders know what they are responsible for/what they are involved in. As part of this planning the group chooses a theme that they will work with for the year.
- Monthly catch-ups for leaders are held. These aren’t particularly long. Their purpose is to build relationship between the leaders and ensure that everybody is on track. Every third or fourth months the leaders meeting is a social gathering. The Youth Co-Ordinator spoke about how important it is to really get to know the leaders and know their personalities. When you really know and love leaders then you are much more tolerant of small challenges.

When meeting with the Youth Co-Ordinator for this group she asked us to remind new leaders that youth ministry doesn’t only happen at youth group... it happens in the church foyer, at the supermarket, on Facebook etc.

# Community Structure 2017

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This community is split based on geographical areas into two clusters (1 and 2) which are further divided into 3 chapters each; south, east and central, and north shore plus two west chapters respectively.

Each cluster is headed up by two leaders (one male and one female) and at least one couple (adult helpers) to supervise their activities. The cluster leaders are in charge of their cluster area and oversee the activities of each chapter area in their cluster.

The chapters are headed up by two leaders each (again one male and one female) and at least one couple to oversee their chapter activities. The chapters which usually number from 30-70 members are further split into households, which are small groups of approximately 4-6 members usually of the same gender headed by a household leader (either male or female depending on the members).

The cluster leaders' main role is to organise cluster events, help out with national events, bring their area to diocesan events, update the chapter leaders on events going on in the cluster/area/diocese and, along with the couple, pastor the chapter leaders.

The chapter leaders' primary role is to organise chapter events, update the household leaders on events in the chapter and any relevant notices that were given by the cluster leaders and, along with the couple, pastor their household leaders.

## **Youth Ministry for a Samoan Group**

This group is for young adults and youth from different parishes in the Auckland Diocese. Youth and children meet one evening a week. The group has about 100-120 members and typically 60-70 would attend an evening session one evening a week.

The larger group is arranged by age groups: under 10, intermediate, college and young adults (35 and under). Families are welcome to attend. Parents sit at the back in support of their young people.

This group was formed for two reasons:

- Vocations (finding your vocation – priest, religious, married, single life)
- Learning the importance of the Samoan culture.

Leadership of the group is quite hierarchical:

- Priest chaplain who oversees spiritual content
- Chairman
- Three Executives (three members of the Office)
- Leadership team of 15 core team members (all young adults aged 18 to 35). The core team have responsibility for different roles
  - Programme leaders (standing up and leading)
  - Music leaders
  - Social services leaders (mentoring, youth work)
  - Cultural team leaders (teaching the Samoan culture)
- Two parent advisors. They are cultural advisers – they are the ones that advise on cultural elements.

The Leadership team meets once a month. They have a planning weekend at the start of each year. At the planning meeting they agree a programme for that year. This programme gets reviewed and updated at the end of every school semester.

All leaders have an opportunity to put ideas/programmes together. They email ideas through and at the strategic planning meeting they agree what is best for the youth at that time. Last year the focus was on Year of Mercy. This year the focus has been on learning the faith. They are using YouCat as a resource for that. Often themes would connect in with a Diocesan or Church theme.

This group has some very talented and creative young people. They will often sing or perform at large events (both Church events and secular community events), for example: Samoan Language Week, WYD Auckland, A visit from the Head of State of Samoa, Year of Mercy Congress.

In March each year Polyfest is held in Auckland. Many members of this group are members of groups who perform at Polyfest so their first semester each year doesn't include so much outreach into the community as members are often busy preparing for Polyfest.