

Workshop 1A: Tu Kahikatea for beginners

Having not been a part of a conference before, I found getting ready for the National Youth Ministry Conference quite exciting. Having my first workshop run by *Maria Pais* on *Tu Kahikatea for beginners* was such a great experience that it gave me a positive outlook for the rest of the conference.

Maria Pais has been leading ministry at Christ the King Parish in Owairaka for over a decade. She is passionate about encouraging and nurturing young people to find their place and use their gifts in Catholic Church. Being a new member to the Auckland Catholic Youth Ministry team I had the opportunity of learning about the framework for Catholic Ministry with young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Maria Pais introduced, discussed and explained to myself and the rest of the delegates the background and basic understandings of Tu Kahikatea.

Maria began with the story of Jesus and the Woman of Samaria. She then asked all the groups to connect this story to the goals of youth ministry. Throughout this discussion many people shared how “Jesus is the only person to sustain us physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally”, others shared that “Jesus was so loving and non-judgemental through talking to the woman of Samaria which is how we must be in our ministry with young people”. These insights helped me to gain a better understanding of the goals of Youth Ministry through the delegate’s different interpretations of the story and goals.

Maria then gave us a bag of Lego parts to create a Lego vehicle. My group tried to assemble the vehicle through analysing the image of the vehicle on the booklet cover. As we assembled our Lego together we felt that we were doing fairly well. As the time came to an end Maria asked the class “Now raise your hand, those of you that opened the booklet”, this is where my group found out that while we thought we had it easy we could’ve had an easier experience by reading the instructions.

Maria compared the Lego parts to the framework of Tu Kahikatea. “I look at it as the vehicle being Youth Ministry and the parts being the components to successful Youth Ministry. We need these components in order for our ‘Youth Ministry’ vehicle to keep moving forward.” Maria further discussed with us how we must learn about the components and the importance of each piece in order for us to keep our ‘vehicle’ of Youth Ministry moving forward. Maria continued to speak about the goals of youth ministry and we further discussed this in our groups, so as to connect on a deeper level with the content.

As we came to a closing Maria shared an inspirational clip about a young boy in a football team. This young boy was asked to Spiderman crawl fifty yards... blindfolded. Throughout the clip the boy struggled, moaned and cried about how hard it was yet his coach pushed him to pass the yards. Further on in the clip the boy finally made it... one hundred yards. Maria then discussed that our ‘coach’ is God and with the help of our ‘coach’ we may be able to not just go fifty yards but push ourselves to go the full one hundred yards.

Throughout the many discussions in my group I was touched by the level of passion other delegates had. I felt that this wouldn’t have been possible without the passion that spilled from Maria Pais and her interaction with the class. As youth ministers we are an important piece of the vehicle, we are the drivers of youth ministry. Before we can drive one hundred yards we must first know the parts that keep our vehicle moving forward, so that we may be able to pick people up along the way.

Contributed by Isa Masae