

July 2008

Highlights

All About Leadership

The term 'leadership' has many connotations and interpretations. Many times it is used to refer to those who embrace change and lead and inspire the change of organizations for the betterment of all. Some people believe that leadership occurs only at the top levels of organizations and that managing occurs in the levels farther down the organization. Some people believe that leadership occurs (or should occur) throughout the organization, while others believe that managing and leading occur at many levels of the organization and are interchangeable.

Very simply put, a leader is someone who sets direction in an effort and influences people to follow that direction. Leaders set direction by developing a clear vision and mission, and conducting planning that determines the goals needed to achieve the vision and mission. They motivate by using a variety of methods, including facilitation, coaching, mentoring, directing, delegating, etc.

There are many views about what characteristics and traits leaders should possess. There are also numerous theories about leadership, or about carrying out the role of leader, e.g., servant leader, democratic leader, principle-centered leader, group-man theory, great-man theory, traits theory, visionary leader, total leader, situational leader, etc.

Hopefully this issue of *NACYML News* will provide you with an opportunity to explore ways in which you serve as a leader, ways in which you inspire and cultivate leadership in others, and ways to enhance leadership abilities.

New Leadership Team Members

Each year, NACYML has been blessed with a leadership team of gifted and generous people. This year is no different. Within the structure of this team, certain roles of leadership are discerned for the smooth functioning of the association. This year, the Leadership Team gathered April 10-13 at Washington Theological Union to set the agenda for the upcoming year.

In addition to the ongoing work of the coordinating committees, project teams and various subcommittees, there was discernment for new leadership positions roles. [See the newly discerned positions.](#)

Regional Representatives

From the Chair

Moving Forward

It is with a different perspective that I approach this quarter's newsletter. I have written these columns as a voice of the leadership team and have offered articles as a member of the newsletter committee. This is the first time I have actually written as the Leadership Team Chairperson. There is no better topic for me at this time than leadership development.



[Read Mary's article...](#)

The NACYML Leadership Team is committed to establishing and maintaining good communication with you. When you have questions, ideas, or find yourself in need of information, feel free to [contact your regional representative](#). You should be receiving periodic updates from your regional representative, in addition to those received from the NACYML office.

NACYML Receives Financial Grant

Recently, the [Catholic Youth Foundation USA \(CYFUSA\)](#) awarded NACYML a grant in the amount of \$1,875. NACYML Receives Financial Grant NACYML is very excited to receive this grant, which will be used to further the profession of Catholic youth ministry by offsetting costs associated with the upcoming online courses offered in collaboration with [Ministry Training Source \(MTS\)](#).

CYFUSA, a subsidiary of the [NFCYM](#), offers grants and scholarships to help offset costs associated with youth programs throughout the country, helping to strengthen the Catholic Church and the skills and competencies of the adults who have answered the call to youth ministry.



Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (USCCB, 2005) emphasizes the need to have programs that allow youth ministers to increase in their knowledge, skills, and formation in order for lay ecclesial ministry to succeed. We are grateful that CYFUSA recognizes that our project meets those goals and has given us the ability to move forward in our collaboration with MTS. We look forward to both creating a learning environment that will challenge and enrich your ministry and your personal lives, and to participating in these courses with you. We are truly blessed by the incredible resources that we have to offer to our members. Since we are a member driven organization, we are dedicated to bringing more programs to you!

Also Featuring...

Be Not Afraid: Cross the Desert to Online Learning

Our education and development as youth ministry leaders is increasingly dependent on the Internet. There are universities and dioceses with entire courses and degrees online. Some of our most loved publishers have resources that are exclusively online. Harcourt, St. Mary's Press, the Center for Ministry Development, and Ministry Training Source are just a few. In our busy ministerial lives, we find increasingly more difficult to go to one more place or do one more thing, even though we know time for ourselves and for prayer is of ultimate importance.

[Read more about NACYML's online learning opportunities...](#)

Being a Youth Leader in the Image of Christ

In researching the topic of Jesus as a model for youth leadership, I found several books with promising titles referring to Jesus and servant leadership. While the books were amply filled with Bible quotations, they tended to describe how one can use Jesus' "techniques" to run a successful business, to be a corporate leader, and, one could assume, become a millionaire in the process. This was not exactly the kind of leadership model I was looking for!

[Read more on this topic...](#)


Leadership Development in Catholic Scouting

When it comes to methods of identifying and forming leaders in youth ministry, a resource available for youth ministers is the methodology used by both Girl Scouts USA and the Boy Scouts of America.

[Find out how by reading further...](#)

Biennial NACYML Membership Gathering NCCYM in Cleveland on Thursday, December 4

The next Membership Gathering is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2008, immediately preceding the [National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry \(NCCYM\)](#) in Cleveland, Ohio. The NCCYM is the largest adult conference for Catholic youth ministers in the country, and is sponsored biennially by the [NFCYM](#) in order to help form and transform adults ministering to youth in the Catholic Church.

NACYML members receive a discount on the NCCYM registration fees. To claim your \$20 discount, you must enter the discount code listed on the [Members' website](#). More information and registration links can be found on the [NCCYM website](#), or by downloading the [informational flyer](#).  (347 KB)

A Picture Is Worth...

Articles in this newsletter correspond to the Core Competencies detailed in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

Look for the symbol in the article that indicates which core competency the article addresses.

To learn more about the standards, see the [resource page](#) which is always accessible from the newsletter navigation bar. It provides a summary of the core competencies and the specialized competencies for youth ministry leaders.



Faithful Citizenship Youth Website Seeks Photographs of Teens in Action!

Are you planning to participate in a diocesan lobby day, a letter writing campaign, or some other action to advocate for policies that promote human life and dignity? Be sure to take your camera with you! Catholic young people can now submit photographs of themselves putting their faith into action to be featured on the youth website that is a new initiative by the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) to reach out to teens with the messages of Faithful Citizenship.




A [Photography Gallery](#) on the Faithful Citizenship Website will feature submissions received (with parental approval) and celebrate the work of young people to

stand for and with the vulnerable. The USCCB is currently seeking photographs for this site. Please encourage the young people you work with to submit their photographs today! For more information, please contact Jill Rauh via [e-mail](#).




Faithful Citizenship Website

See the [Faithful Citizenship website](#) for resources and more information, or [download the informational flyer](#).  (190 KB)

Print the Newsletter!

Two print options offer streamlined process for printing *NACYML News*.

- Use your browser's print function or click on the  "Print this page" link at the bottom of the right-hand navigation column to print an individual page.
- Print the entire issue by using the link below. This will open a single PDF document made up of "printed pages" of each article in order. Or, download this PDF to your computer by right-clicking the link and selecting "Save Target As..." With the PDF file open, click the printer command in the Adobe Reader interface and the entire issue will be printed.



 [Download the PDF print file for this entire issue.](#)  (460 KB)

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July 2008

From the Chair

By Mary Mueller

Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Shawnee, Kansas

Moving Forward



It is with a different perspective that I approach this quarter's newsletter. I have written these columns as a voice of the leadership team and have offered articles as a member of the newsletter committee. This is the first time I have actually written as the Leadership Team Chairperson. There is no better topic for me at this time than leadership development.

As Grace Cassetta, NACYML's founding chairperson moves into the role of member in this member driven organization, I think of how she has worked with the development of leaders. Her commitment to shared leadership, collaboration, and upholding the mission and vision of this association have moved us from brand new to fledgling. Grace's ability to call forth the gifts of others inspired and focused a newly formed leadership team and fostered the growth of confident spokespersons for NACYML. She has, indeed, developed leaders. And we are grateful.

As youth ministry leaders, we concern ourselves with the development of leadership skills and abilities in our young people. We create opportunities for involvement, and we challenge teens to move into areas that may be beyond their comfort zones. We develop camps, retreats, and workshops designed to empower and encourage young people to take their places as leaders within our communities. This issue contains information on all of these aspects of leadership development.

In focusing on developing leaders, we sometimes neglect our own need for leadership development. In the weeks since the NACYML Leadership Team met, I have spent a fair amount of time reflecting on where I need to focus some of my own energies in development. How wonderful if the perfect book, course, or seminar should find its way into my mailbox. In reality, the responsibility is my own. Recognizing gifts and shortcomings, and acting on each, is part of the leadership development which we, as responsible church leaders, must act.

But we need not act alone. NACYML, as a member driven organization, is a vehicle that can promote our development as youth ministry leaders. An opportunity to come together as a network, as people called to ministry, NACYML is a venue for challenge and growth for each of us personally and professionally.

Discover Members in Your Area

Have you checked the [NACYML Member Directory](#) lately? You can search our membership database by parish, diocese, region, or member name. Make it a point to contact a member nearby. Have coffee together. Find out what gifts and needs you share. Discover how you can help each other develop as youth ministry leaders.



Share Your Gifts

Have you been invited to share your leadership to promote the growth and success of NACYML? With over six hundred members from all over the country, our needs are great because your needs are great. How can we come together as leaders to meet these professional needs? Take a look at the work that is on the table for the next year.

Plan to join us at the NACYML Biennial Membership Meeting in Cleveland on December 4, immediately preceding the [National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry](#). Meet other youth ministry leaders face to face and begin to move forward as professionals.

As leaders, we are stretched, challenged and called to grow. As leaders, we have a responsibility to continue to develop our skills and abilities. I look forward to the challenge and gift of growing with NACYML, and with each of you.

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4, 5, 8)

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July 2008

Do I Really Need Leadership Development?

By Faye E. Abbondanza

*Associate Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Diocese of Youngstown*

The Necessity of Ongoing Formation

Lifelong formation is key to our journey as Catholic Christians. For lay ecclesial ministers, whether paid or volunteer, ongoing formation is a necessity! How can we expect to form young people, if we are not participating in the journey ourselves?

If we are to be youth ministry leaders, then we must attend to our own education and formation, hone our talents, and strengthen and/or develop our own skills. We are called in [Renewing the Vision of Youth Ministry](#) to empower young people to live as disciples of Christ, as responsible and active participants in the life and mission of the church, while encouraging their total personal and spiritual development. How can we do this?

In the themes of comprehensive youth ministry, leadership is called forth to guide comprehensive ministry. Leadership development is one of the eight components of comprehensive ministry. The bishops are giving us a number of clues as to how this must be accomplished. We are to call forth, affirm and empower youth and adults to use their gifts and talents, as well as train them to draw out gifts and talents in others. To do this, we must attend to developing our leadership skills in ministry.



Getting Started

A good place to begin is with your diocesan youth ministry office. This is where you will find local educational opportunities and training courses. On a national level, look to the [National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry \(NFCYM\)](#) for a variety of leadership training opportunities such as in-services, the [New Diocesan Directors Institute](#), the [National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry](#) and the [Called to Witness program](#). On the [NFCYM website](#) there are a number academic institutions and organizations listed that offer degree and certificate programs in youth ministry.

Do not leave the website without looking at the [list of Collaborating Members](#), many of which also offer resources and/or training in leadership and youth ministry.

Brief Overview of Opportunities

- The [Center for Ministry Development](#) offers a number of training programs as well as a variety of conferences and workshops for leadership in youth ministry. The *Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies* is a leadership training program to equip coordinators of youth ministry and program leaders to develop a comprehensive youth ministry approach. *Empowering Adults for Youth Ministry* provides a systematic, hands on, inspirational approach to youth ministry leadership development. Adult workshops include: *Effective Practices for Dynamic Youth Ministry*, and *Sharing the Faith with Young Adolescents*. Programs for teams of youth and adults include: *Young Neighbors in Action*, *YouthLeader*, and *YouthServe*. CMD also provides resources, training and support for family and intergenerational and young adult ministry.
- [Cultivation Ministries](#) offers an Institute for New Youth Ministers, to train adult leadership and a Peer Ministry Retreat for youth leadership training. There are also one-day seminars such as *Growing Teen Disciples*, *Recruiting, Training and Retaining Youth Workers*, and *Renewing the Soul of the Youth Worker*.
- [Instituto Fey y Vida](#) focuses on pastoral ministry with Hispanic youth and young adults. They offer a

certificate program, advanced seminars, an initiation course, a national leadership symposium, and training of trainers for ministry with Hispanic youth.

- [Ministry Training Source](#) provides ministry formation programming and courses to individual ministry leaders and teams. MTS offers such services as workshops, computer based ministry training, online courses, and continuing research on adult learning and ministry.
- [The National Black Catholic Congress](#) sponsors regional *Lay Leaders Training Workshops* that provide various community based models, including strategies for parish organization, forming teams, and evangelizing the unchurched and inactive Catholics in the African-American community. The National Black Catholic Congress Convocation seeks to provide training to priests, deacons, lay leaders, and religious who work in the African American apostolate. The objective is to maximize their effectiveness as ministers in a parish and/or diocesan setting.
- [St. Meinrad's Youth Liturgy Leadership Institute](#), through the Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation, offers programs for youth and young adults in addition to training for campus and youth ministers. *One Bread, One Cup* is a liturgical ministry leadership formation conference for youth and adult leaders. Their college internships offer a summer spiritual, academic and leadership formation program for college students.

As indicated, there are many more leadership development programs available. Just take a look and discover all the possibilities. We are always in formation—keep at it—and discover where the possibilities can lead you!

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July 2008

Being a Youth Leader in the Image of Christ

*By Deacon Bob Killoren
Diocesan Scout Chaplain
Diocese of Columbus*

In researching the topic of Jesus as a model for youth leadership, I found several books with promising titles referring to Jesus and servant leadership. While the books were amply filled with Bible quotations, they tended to describe how one can use Jesus' "techniques" to run a successful business, to be a corporate leader, and, one could assume, become a millionaire in the process. This was not exactly the kind of leadership model I was looking for!

So I turned to the Gospels themselves to see how Jesus exercised leadership, especially in relationship to his encounters with young people. Of course, the scene at the Last Supper when Jesus washes the feet of the Apostles is a great lesson on servant leadership and came to mind immediately. It is a wonderful story, and to really get a feel for the depth of the spirituality this model evokes, I would highly recommend you read Jean Vanier's book, *The Scandal of Service: Jesus Washes Our Feet*. But this did not speak to me particularly about youth ministry.



Then, as I did some keyword searches on [Bible.com](http://www.bible.com/) (<http://www.bible.com/>), one passage in Mark simply leaped out at me. How many times had I heard or read it? But I suddenly saw it in a totally different way. You could almost refer to it as the commissioning of youth ministry. Here is the passage:

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.' (Mk 9: 33-37)



First, this Gospel passage captures Jesus' consistent teaching on leadership. Over and over he tells his disciples that if they are going to be the leaders of his new church they must count themselves last and be servant to all. When our society thinks about great leaders, we see strong men and women who are at the top of their professions, who control every situation with their power and charisma, who are looked up to and admired by all.

Jesus says of them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt." (Mk 10:42) But it cannot be that way for the leaders of his church. They must be servants not rulers, they must put the concerns of others before their own.

Then in a remarkable juxtaposition, Jesus draws a child near him, embraces the child, and gives us what basically amounts to a commission to welcome the children as we would welcome him. In Jesus' time children were on the lowest rung of the social scale, the weakest of all. So Jesus uses them symbolically to represent all the lowly ones his disciples are to serve. Yet at the same time, Jesus is very much referring specifically to children as needing all the special care, concern, and protection that the word 'welcome' implies.

Jesus linked a key aspect of discipleship and servant leadership to working specifically with children. Not only that, Jesus gave us a path to God that starts with our welcoming of the little children. This is a special commission he has given us: to work with youth, to guide them and nourish them 'in his name,' and to serve them with special love and care.

As youth ministers, we are privileged to be called to this special apostolate of welcoming the little ones. It is our way of welcoming Jesus and the Father into our hearts. To explore all the ways that this plays out in our work as youth ministers would take at least a book. But I encourage you to pray over this Scripture passage and see how it speaks to you about the leadership you bring to youth ministry.

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July 2008

Be Not Afraid: Cross the Desert to Online Learning

*By Catherine Becker
St. James Catholic Church, Rockford, Illinois*

When was the last time you sent a paper newsletter or postcard to the youth in your parish or school? It has probably been a long time. We have gone electronic with everything from using e-mail and parish websites for regular communication to using iPods for music at prayer services. You may have noticed that some of your teens do not know what to do with paper (except fold it into airplanes and origami). Our youth use the Internet or text messaging for almost all of their conversations with friends, school work, and research. I cannot remember ever taking my sixteen year old daughter to the library to get reference books!

Why Should I Take an Online Class?

Our education and development as youth ministry leaders is increasingly dependent on the Internet as well. There are universities and dioceses with entire courses and degrees online. Some of our most well loved publishers have resources that are exclusively online. Harcourt, St. Mary's Press, the Center for Ministry Development, and Ministry Training Source are just a few. In our busy ministerial lives, we find increasingly more difficult to go to one more place or do one more thing, even though we know time for ourselves and for prayer is of ultimate importance.



The NACYML partnership with Ministry Training Source (MTS) is the perfect way for you to jump in. Starting late this summer, MTS will offer online learning courses and personal spirituality refreshers. NACYML members will receive priority and a member discount on the registration fees. The courses will be entirely online so you can work at your own pace, as time allows. CEUs for your diocese or other educational institution are available for these courses. We offered a course last year on *Co-Workers In The Vineyard*. The NACYML members who participated were excited to be part of the project and loved the ease of using the materials. Past participants were thrilled to hear of the opportunity to take more courses.

What Is an Online Class Like?

Do not worry, you really can not make a mistake while working online. You cannot erase an entire body of work from a website, and you may be surprised to find how easy it is to communicate with classmates on the forum or blogs required by the class.





I am currently taking an online course from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Each week there are readings and assignments. Most of them are online, so I did not have to spend much money on books. By Wednesday of each week I post my assignments on the forum, access the class with my password, and just start typing in the assignment box. Then, by Friday, each student is required to reply to three other students to dialogue. Usually, by Friday, we have quite a conversation going. Many times two or three of us will correspond about a specific topic, or sometimes the whole class will weigh in on a subject. The teacher enters into the conversations and replies to everyone with feedback each

week.

I thought I would miss the classroom conversations, but the online conversations have been even richer because everyone gets a chance to speak up. This format is fantastic for an extrovert (like myself) who thinks out loud. I can write my posts, change them, or add to them as much as I want. But the introverted side of me likes being able to think for awhile before commenting sometimes. The course I am taking does not have any "live" sessions with the instructor but some courses do include that element as well.

Of course, ministry is grounded in relationship and I believe that there is a value in personal contact or a handwritten note. (I actually do send a paper newsletter and post cards almost weekly because I have found that electronic communication is sometimes ignored.) But, the current reality of our young church is that electronic media is the way to communicate and get things accomplished. So, it is extremely important for us, as adult leaders in ministry, to take the leap and 'click the mouse.' Not only is it the primary way to connect with young people, it is the easiest way to catch up with our own formation and education.

Register for Online Courses

Give the MTS courses a try. If you became a new NACYML member at the NCYC in Columbus you received one free course, so be sure to redeem it. All other members can take advantage of the NACYML members' discount as outlined on the [attached informational flyer](#)  (216 KB) and [registration form](#)  (135 KB) . We are looking forward to meeting the virtual you!

"It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to."
(J.R.R. Tolkien, "Three Is Company," The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, 1954)

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July 2008

Diocesan Summer Leadership Camp

By Pia Kayo, Coordinator of Youth Ministry
Church of St. Timothy, Escondido, California

Do you have teens who are on fire for God and love hanging out at the parish, and who want to serve as leaders in the youth ministry program? Great! What kind of training is available to them that is both fun and educational? Take a look at what one diocese offers its young leaders.

Each summer, high school youth and young adults from parishes throughout the [Diocese of San Diego](#) gather for five days of training and fellowship at [Camp Emmaus](#). It is named for the Scripture passage that describes the post-resurrection journey of Jesus with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. As they walked, the disciples shared with Jesus (not knowing to whom they were speaking) their knowledge of his ministry, his sacrifice, and what they had heard about his resurrection. Jesus listened to them and then shared with them the scriptural basis for all that had occurred. At the end of the road they shared a meal together, and after Jesus spoke the blessing and broke the bread, he disappeared when the two disciples recognized him as their Lord. The two disciples then went eagerly into Jerusalem to share the news of what they had experienced.



The Emmaus story provides both the model and the goal for this leadership camp. Adult youth ministry leaders walk the journey with the teens who attend the camp, discussing and sharing faith stories, praying together, eating together, and celebrating the Eucharist. The teens that complete this training then go back to their parishes to share the journey with the young people in their communities. The idea is that they will take what they learn at camp and apply it to their parish youth ministry programs.

Teens are empowered to lead with confidence and proficiency by equipping them with tools and experiences that will assist them in their ministry. Over the course of the week, working side-by-side with their adult mentors, the young people learn such skills as facilitating small groups, leading discussions and games, planning prayer and liturgical services, practice listening skills, and take time to reflect on their own personal relationships with God. Young people are given opportunities to share their own faith as they learn from one another how God is working in each others' lives. Keynote speakers address the teens on subjects of spiritual growth and practical leadership. Also included in the week are a concert and a talent show. Through this camp, the Diocese of San Diego provides a well-rounded program that is edifying to the participants and, importantly, is also a lot of fun.

Camp Emmaus has various tracks:

- beginners track for first time attendees
- veterans track for those who have previously attended the camp
- young adult track for 18-20 year olds who are actively serving in leadership positions in their parishes

The cost for this program is \$250 per person. Many parishes pay for some or all of their young leaders' tuition because they recognize the importance of such training. The youth are encouraged to raise, or earn, the balance of this fee as part of their commitment to their leadership team.

This model of training is valuable and effective because it is based upon a scriptural model. As Jesus did with two of his disciples, the adults in this program walk the journey with the teen leaders; they listen to their concerns, hopes, and experiences, while sharing with them the scriptural basis for everything connected to discipleship. At the end of the program, the youth leaders are excited and eager to return to their parishes (their own Jerusalem) to share what they have learned.

Leadership is not always about acting or speaking. If God gave you the vision for an event or activity, you were obedient, and God's vision is being carried out, you are a leader whether or not you appear to be leading, and whether or not you get the credit.
(Energion Publications, Copyright © 2005, Henry E. Neufeld – used with permission)

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July 2008

Youth Ministry Helpers: Tips for Fostering Volunteers

*By Sean McDonald, Coordinator of Youth Ministry
St. Cecilia Church, Kearny, New Jersey*

Face it, whether you are a youth minister or a coordinator of youth ministry, regardless of the title, the work of youth ministry is difficult and, while many of us may think that we can do it by ourselves, the fact is that a little help is always needed and should always be appreciated.

Indispensible Volunteers

That is where volunteers come in. Hopefully, we all have them—the generous men and women who offer to help coordinate your parish's youth ministry program. I am fortunate to have a couple of these people who give their time and talent to help me. Truth be told, the appreciation I feel for everything that these folks do to help our youth ministry program cannot be adequately expressed through the mere words in this article.



I do, however, want to take the opportunity to offer some advice on the selection, training, and rewarding of the volunteers.

Volunteer Selection

Be selective but not exclusionary. It is important for youth ministers and coordinators to realize that not everyone who wants to help is actually suited to help. Youth ministry is difficult and challenging work. You must make sure that those who are helping with your programs understand these challenges. Youth ministers must get to know those who want to volunteer and need to ensure that those who want to help have the best interests of the young people in mind. We live in a world with some very dangerous people. Youth ministers and coordinators must make every effort to protect their programs and the youth who participate in them. Above all, ensure that you are in compliance with any guidelines issued by the parish and/or diocese.

Volunteer Training

Youth ministry volunteers should have firm morals, uncompromising integrity, and a strong faith life. We all need some refreshers from time to time. Most dioceses offer courses, retreats, seminars, etc. for people who work with youth ministry programs. Encourage, or require, your volunteers to attend these sessions occasionally.

Volunteer Appreciation

Sometimes, a simple 'thank you' will do the trick. But you should go further if you can. Take your volunteers out to dinner, buy them movie tickets, take them bowling. Do something to show your appreciation! The folks that help me in our program do not do it for any recognition or to get themselves mentioned in newsletter articles. They help because

Know Where to Draw the Line

Unfortunately, there are some volunteers that either do not know how to draw the line between adult matters and youth matters or they do not feel the need to do so. This is very dangerous if it is not addressed immediately. Your adult volunteers must understand and accept that, while it is important to be there for the youth, they themselves are not youth. They are adults and need to conduct themselves as such. Adult volunteers should exercise caution when communicating with youth or becoming part of a youth's e-mail distribution list. Also, adult

they are generous servants of our Lord and the church. But a little recognition or appreciation from me does not hurt! And it will not hurt you either!

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volunteers should not permit young people access to their personal websites (i.e.: My Space, Facebook, etc.). One of my volunteers has a smart policy—if you are not eighteen, you do not get access to her My Space page. No discussion. No negotiation. It is not that she has anything to hide or anything inappropriate on her page, but it is that she realizes the potential issues that could arise if she did not have this policy in place. Adult volunteers must take necessary steps to protect themselves and the youth under their care.

July 2008

Middle School Summer Camp: Is It for Your Parish?

*By Pat Clasby, Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Good Shepherd Parish, San Diego, California*

I spent a good part of my young adult life learning about, and working with, middle school youth at the Diocese of Baker summer camps. At twenty years of age, I thought spending a week with middle school youth would be fun! It turned out to be a life changing experience, and solidified the notion that I was being called to the field of youth ministry. That summer, my role was to facilitate a small group of ten youth. For those of us who worked at the camp, there was a sense of accomplishment, a sense that lives had been touched and transformed. The question was, whose lives were changed more, ours as young adults or the young people with whom we had worked? It was a great summer, but I did not realize how great until the following year.

Year Two

I will never forget the first cars pulling into camp the following summer. Families were bringing the youth an hour to an hour and a half early. The road to camp was dirt, and as cars stopped, doors flew open even as the dust was still settling. Young people came running out of their family cars excited to be spending a week at 'church camp.' It was at that moment that I thought to myself, we might be have something here.

Fast Forward

It was 1997, and I was a parish youth minister. Having spent seven years working my way up through the middle school camps in Oregon, I was now at a parish in San Diego that, by itself, could have between seventy to a hundred youth at a middle school camp. This was different from my past experience in that it would take our whole diocese sending youth from various parishes to provide that many young people. I wondered if having a middle school camp at our parish was truly a possibility and what would result from it. As it turned out, the benefits helped grow youth ministry in our parish tremendously.



As I stated at the outset, the youth that second summer of camp came pouring out of their cars. It was great to see young people express excitement about their faith. Practical skills were taught and shared, giving them the tools to express their faith in their schools, in their homes, and in a world where trying to live your faith out loud can be very difficult for a young person.

Parish Camp Grows Ministry

At the parish level, some really exciting things happened that I believe most youth ministers hope happen in their ministries as well. First, in addition to youth being excited about their faith, parents were excited about the impact the camp experience had on their child. As such, parents were very supportive about future youth ministry endeavors. Parents willingly wanted to become volunteers. Parents were more open to things such as justice and service trips with young people, family prayer nights either at the parish or at home, and most importantly, parents became advocates for the youth and the youth ministry needs of the parish.

Next, as middle school youth became high school youth, there was a growth in the high school program. In addition, youth who had gone to camp were now bringing their friends who were on the fringes of the church. They were bringing youth who were Catholic but were not too sure about attending Mass and other youth ministry related functions. Not only did youth ministry activities such as catechesis and youth nights become a must attend event, so did Mass. Why?



- Young adults and adults who had staffed the camp were still involved back home at the parish. When young people saw this, they wanted to be there. Church as a whole became an acceptable place to be. These same young adults and adults were helping facilitate faith formation classes, leading youth nights and retreats, etc. Did the young adults and adults have to be at everything? No. But they were at enough gatherings that the connection was there. A mentorship had been established where these young adults and adults were taking just as much responsibility for the young people as the parish youth minister.
- Middle school youth brought back what they experienced at camp and started sharing those experiences with the parish community at large. While young adults inspired the youth, the youth, in turn, inspired the young adults. As a result of these camps, I have seen young adults become youth ministers, go into the priesthood, become doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.

When looking at any ministry, it is important to remember to be patient. While much success can, and should, come from having something like a summer camp, it will take time for the stories of success to spread. As it does, and support builds over time, opportunities for furthering the ministry will arise, providing avenues to grow a more comprehensive ministry to young people at all levels.

Every Christian is in a position to lead, however small or obscure that position, even if you only lead through your witness for Christ. Some people are called to lead more people, and to lead in more ways than others are, and we tend to call these people leaders.
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Leadership Development in Catholic Scouting

By Kyle Holtgrave, Associate Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministry
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When it comes to methods of identifying and forming leaders in youth ministry, a resource available for youth ministers is the methodology used by both Girl Scouts USA and the Boy Scouts of America. The [National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#) (NCCS) publishes the Religious Emblems Reference Manual that outlines how to identify and welcome counselors who will be instrumental in supporting the religious emblems program in the local scouting unit. The [National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire](#) (NCCGSCF) has a similar document titled the Catholic [Religious Recognition Moderator Training Manual](#). While each of these manuals is written specifically to address the nuts and bolts of how to prepare leaders for the religious emblems and recognitions programs, the leadership development methodology can easily be adapted for youth ministry. While many of the volunteers who help in our ministries are people we already know and have a relationship with, the method below is designed for dealing with those whom we may only know from a ministry survey or a 'cold call' by someone wanting to get more involved with your ministry.



Step One: Background Check

The first step for preparing leaders is to do a background check. This includes ensuring that the prospective leader is in compliance with your diocesan policies for working with young people. In many dioceses, volunteers are required to fill out an application, much like one would for a job. Use the information from this application to call people who know the prospective leader and find out more about this person. While it may seem difficult or uncomfortable to call on references and to pry into someone's background, the things you learn about a prospective leader will be invaluable. If this step is done well, you should have a clear understanding of the suitability this person has for being in a position of trust with young people.

Step Two: Personal Visit and Interview

The next stage of preparing leaders is to arrange a personal visit with the prospective leader. This is your chance to learn more about the candidate and how they may fit into your comprehensive youth ministry strategies. If the volunteer already expresses interest in a particular area, use this time to explain the



Professional Practice

various duties and responsibilities of the program and leadership. If your prospective leader is not sure where they want to be involved, this personal visit is a great opportunity for you to present the options you have available as well as a leadership job description that outlines your expectations for people serving in each leadership role.

Step Three: Pastor's Approval

After interviewing the candidate, the next step is to get the pastor's support. Since a pastor is responsible for everything that goes on in his parish, make sure he knows who is involved. Talking with your pastor about new leaders in your ministry is a great way to keep him informed about your ministry in general, so use this opportunity to continually strengthen your relationship with your boss!

With the pastor's approval, formation can begin. The NCCGSCF and NCCS manuals provide outlines and timelines for the training programs for the religious emblems and recognitions. The needs of your ministry will determine how extensive of a formation program you will need for your volunteers. Once the formation has been completed, you are ready to commission your new leader as a partner in your ministry efforts!



Step Four: Support

The final step for leadership development is support. Support can come in a variety of ways. The NCCS manual recommends a systematic in-service training program for the religious emblems counselors, covering topics such as reviewing the religious emblems promotional efforts, learning about any changes on the requirements for any of the emblems programs, and an open discussion on any problems counselors have encountered or suggestions they might have to improve the program. The goal of supporting your new leaders is to let them know that they are not left to fend for themselves in their leadership role. Some leaders will need a lot of support while others will not. Each ministry situation will determine how much and how often support is needed.

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Points of Light Leadership Institute

By Terry Aiken

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The [Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute](#) (PLYLI) is a state of the art training program designed to teach leadership and community service skills to high school age students. The program was originally created by Prudential Financial and developed with funding from the [Prudential Foundation](#). In 2004, the program was officially transferred to the [Points of Light Foundation](#) and renamed the Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute. Youth service professionals who have been certified as trainers for the program are currently conducting the PLYLI in over forty states across the United States.

There are three major program elements to The Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute. They include teaching the curriculum, planning and implementing the community service project, and conducting a graduation ceremony. In addition to the program elements, there are also supporting activities that can assist local trainers in having a successful program.

Curriculum

The Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute employs a specially designed curriculum developed by the [Center for Creative Leadership](#), one of the world's foremost authorities on leadership training. It



incorporates the latest methodology for teaching key leadership skills such as goal setting, team building, project planning, and decision making while emphasizing the importance and means of applying these skills to community service endeavors. The training program consists of approximately thirty hours of classroom instruction, plus hands-on field exercises and a community service project.

Service

The service project is a unique part of the programming that distinguishes it from similar leadership training programs. The purpose of the service project is to give participants an opportunity to utilize what they have learned from the training curriculum, gain confidence in their abilities to create, develop, and implement a service project, and act upon their social concerns expressed during training. The project can be completed in a single day or over a period of time.

Graduation

The graduation ceremony is an essential element of the program. It is an opportunity for the young people to celebrate their accomplishments and a way for the community to recognize their commitment. The graduation ceremony can be held on the same day as the service project or done as a separate event.

As a certified trainer, I assist with the development and the implementation of the program in my area. Many of the youth in my parish have participated in the program and benefited from the training experience as a tool to meet the changing needs in our local community. Our parish youth have taken

What are some prerequisites for leadership in the body of Christ?

There really is only one: Be willing . . .

Read Hebrews, chapter 11 some time and look up each person's name in a concordance. How many were prepared for service when they were called? God can use anyone, even a donkey, to lead someone!

ownership of the program and now help facilitate the planning, implementation, and the evaluation of community service projects. They have taken the skills learned in the program to assist with the organization of parish ministries. The Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute program is more than a leadership program for our youth—it has become a way of life in our parish and local communities.

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