

September 2007

Highlights



You Asked For It!

Various members have asked for a streamlined process for printing the *NACYML News*—whether one article at a time or the whole online issue at once. With this issue that capability becomes a reality. You now have two print options:

- Each article (webpage) can be printed using a special style sheet that will format the article for reading while stripping away web navigation and other presentational elements. Simply use your browser's print function or click on the "Print this page" link at the bottom of the right-hand navigation column.
- The entire issue can be printed by using the link below. This will open a single PDF document made up of "printed pages" of each article in order. (You can also 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.



[Open or download the PDF print file for this entire issue.](#)



Are you constantly on the lookout for the perfect resource for building your ministry?

As you sit down and relax with this latest edition of the NACYML NEWS, know that the writing team has done some homework for you! You will find some new perspectives on resources in books, technology, and of the human form. Take some time to reflect on which resources you go to most frequently, and what this says about your ministry, your needs as a youth ministry leader, and your own faith life.

This newsletter informs members on some new favorites and invites your sharing of resources, gifts, and ideas in the discussion forums.

From the Vice-Chair

NACYML as a Resource

In our mission statement, NACYML states that we are about "promoting the profession and practice of Catholic youth ministry."

As such, it is time to take a look at how NACYML is a resource for youth ministry leaders.

[Continue reading Mary's article...](#)

Other Feature Articles...

Human Resources! Who Do I Ask for Help?

Often when we think of looking for resources in ministry, we look to our bookshelves or to the Internet, but some of our best resources for ministry are other people.

[Read more...](#)

Tangible Media Resources for

Quid Est Veritas?

[Keeping on Track with the New Youth Catechism](#)

Last year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published a catechism that was "proposed and developed for the purpose of catechizing teens and young adults." It is called the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

I think we should just call it the Youth Catechism.

The bishops recommend that the text be used as a "standard reference companion to which teachers and catechists refer their students in much the same way that they use Bibles for instruction. It is not meant to replace religion textbooks, but to augment and compliment them."

[Read more...](#)

[Ready, Set, Serve!](#)

Twenty-two years old, the ink was barely dry on my college diploma when I officially started as director of youth ministry in my parish. Armed with a notebook full of ideas, a heart ready to serve, and a head full of idealism I set out to change the world, one teenager at a time. While I still hold many of the ideals that I started this youth ministry journey with, I have learned that sometimes it takes a few props to keep things rolling smoothly.

[Read more...](#)

[Youth Ministry](#)

It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since I wrote about the top ten things that new youth ministry leaders need to know to get started in their ministry. In that article I included some of my favorite 'must have' resources to get started.

Here are some more tangible media sources to help you in your ministry. They range from free to minimal cost, and all contain great stuff.

[Read more...](#)

[Call Me, Call Me Any Time](#)

We seldom find ourselves out of cell phone range these days. They interrupt meetings, help locate parents, and every once in a while cause a disruption during liturgy. What are we supposed to do? Jenn Ledonne offers some suggestions about how to integrate the cell phone into ministry with young people.

[Read more...](#)



Share your favorite resources with other NACYML members. Follow the [link to the discussion forum](#) and offer your own insights into favorite resources in the areas of:

- spirituality
- leadership development
- theology
- parish life
- youth focused activities and gatherings

Share Your Bread

Resource Reviews from the NACYML Leadership Team

The NACYML leadership team brings a variety of gifts to the association, with each member sharing a perspective that is invaluable in the growing of this organization. For this edition of Sharing Our

Bread, the group was asked to share some of their favorite 'go to' resources with us.

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.



A Special Offer

**YOUTH MINISTRY ACCESS:
One Free Month**

The Center for Ministry Development is currently offering a 13-month subscription to Youth Ministry Access for the cost of a 12-month subscription. To look at the site, visit the [Center for Ministry Development website](#).



Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

September 2007

From the Vice-Chair

By Mary Mueller
 Good Shepherd Catholic Church
 Shawnee, Kansas

NACYML as a Resource

In our mission statement, NACYML states that we are about “promoting the profession and practice of Catholic youth ministry.” As such, it is time to take a look at how NACYML is a resource for youth ministry leaders.

We provide members with opportunities for networking: through discussion forums, the member directory, through sharing information of local networks around the country, and by inviting members to gather at our biennial membership meeting. Putting youth ministry leaders in touch with each other is an invaluable resource.



We provide members the opportunity to grow the field of youth ministry. In the past year, members have been invited to participate in the sharing of their gifts with the [Notre Dame Vision program](http://www.nd.edu/~ndvi/) (<http://www.nd.edu/~ndvi/>) and [Cultivation Ministries' Institute for New Youth Ministers](http://www.cultivationministries.com/INYM1.html) (<http://www.cultivationministries.com/INYM1.html>). In addition, members were asked for input on the draft of the U.S. bishops' upcoming document on stewardship and youth.

We provide access to continuing education opportunities. This past spring, in collaboration with [Ministry Training Source](http://www.ministrytrainingsource.org/) (<http://www.ministrytrainingsource.org/>), NACYML members were able to participate in an online course on *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*.

We work with other organizations to offer member discounts on resources at home. Included in this list are discounts from the [Center for Ministry Development](http://secure.cmdnet.org/index.cfm) (<http://secure.cmdnet.org/index.cfm>), [Group Publishing](http://www.grouppublishing.com/) (<http://www.grouppublishing.com/>), and [Saint Mary's Press](http://www.smp.org/) (<http://www.smp.org/>).

While NACYML serves as a resource to our members, we are only as strong as the gifts and resources that our membership shares with the association. Members generously share their gifts with our project teams and coordinating committees. Members help build NACYML by inviting others to take a look at what is offered. Members certainly are our most valuable resource as we work together, committed to “promoting the practice and profession of Catholic youth ministry.”

Leadership in NACYML

New Leadership Team Members

September 15 begins the process for discerning new members to the NACYML Leadership Team. Serving on the Leadership Team is a wonderful opportunity both to help advance our field of ministry and to network with other youth ministry leaders nationally. Leadership Team members make the following commitment:

- Attend the annual Leadership Team meeting, April 11-13, 2008.
- Participate in three Leadership Team conference calls and four committee conference calls.
- Serve on a Coordinating Committee or the Executive Committee.

- Serve as a liaison to NACYML members in a given region.
- Spend approximately eight hours a month on NACYML business.

Please prayerfully consider if you are being called to serve NACYML as part of the Leadership Team. The process takes five months with the final decision being affirmed by the NFCYM Board of Directors at their February meeting, after which applicants will be notified of results. Look for applications on the NACYML website by September 15. Contact [Mary Mueller via e-mail](#), or by phone at 913-631-7356.

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Quid Est Veritas?

Keeping on Track with the New Youth Catechism

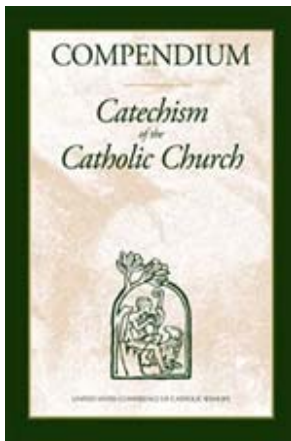
By Deacon Bob Killoren
Diocesan Scout Chaplain
Diocese of Columbus

One of the things our young people enjoy is a session we call, "Ask Deacon Bob." Before I arrive for the session, catechists hand out small sheets of paper and pencils, and the teens can write down questions about their faith and the way of life of a follower of Christ.

The questions are always on target; probing some of the most difficult questions of our times, the mysteries of faith with which we all struggle, and the ultimate question of what it means to love God and to be loved by God. Usually they challenge my limits of understanding of faith and morality.



As youth ministry leaders, whether our role is to teach young people about the faith or coach them in sports, we must be ready for young people asking these questions of us. They want to know about life and faith and expect us to give them some answers!



Last year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published a catechism that was "proposed and developed for the purpose of catechizing teens and young adults." It is called the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (<http://www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?sku=5-720>). I think we should just call it the Youth Catechism.

The bishops recommend that the text be used as a "standard reference companion to which teachers and catechists refer their students in much the same way that they use Bibles for instruction. It is not meant to replace religion textbooks, but to augment and compliment them."

Like the original *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Compendium has four sections, basically covering: the Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Prayer. The text is in a question and answer format.

Many of the questions and answers are far from simple. They are, however, within the grasp of serious young learners, and they provide rich fodder for fruitful discussion. This resource does not back down from tough issues. This is hard-hitting and factual teaching, and sure to enliven discussions. Teens and adults will appreciate the resource.

In addition to doctrinal matter, the Compendium also provides a section of common Catholic prayers including the Our Father and Hail Mary in English and Spanish, side-by-side with the Latin version of the prayers and a section on "Formulas of Catholic Doctrine," including the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, theological and cardinal virtues, and spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

It is important that all catechetical programs and learning activities involving young people be in conformity with the true teaching of the Catholic Church. You can rely on the Compendium to provide that compass on matters of faith and morals.

Whether you keep the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on hand for answering

questions, order it for your young people, or simply know it exists, the new 'Youth Catechism' can keep you on the right path!

The Compendium is also available for download on the [Vatican website](http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html) (http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html).

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“Sharing Your Bread with the Hungry” Isaiah 58:7

Resource Reviews from the NACYML Leadership Team

The NACYML leadership team brings a variety of gifts to our association, with each member sharing a perspective that is invaluable in the growing of this organization. All of the leadership team members are professional youth ministry leaders, and for this edition of Sharing Our Bread, the group was asked to share some of their favorite “go to” resources.

Pat Howard from the Church of Saint John Neumann in Eagan Minnesota, is the chairperson for the NACYML website project team. Pat offers *Celebration of Discipline* (Richard Foster, Harper Collins, 1998). “This is the book I would turn to if I needed to be put back together again. Bible in one hand, *Celebration of Discipline* in the other; several times that is how I have grown and deepened in my faith and in keeping the various facets of my life in integrity. I have even used it as a basis for youth retreats, guiding youth in spiritual disciplines so that they too can know the freedom of the children of God which they, we, are.”

Chris Weber of the Muscatine Catholic Community in Muscatine, Iowa serves NACYML as secretary. On technology resources Chris says the following:



“For me, the key to using technology effectively in ministry has been to understand it as a tool, and not as an end in and of itself. There can be a temptation to think we need to ‘wow’ people by playing retreat music through our iPod or backing up our message with a zippy Power Point slide. For me it is about saving time. If a certain piece of technology saves me time, which I can devote to relational ministry with a young person or to much needed time with family, then I am all about it. If it is just the latest cool gadget, then I am not excited. As far as a one-stop-shop, I really do not have one, but here are a few websites to consider.

- [WOOT!](http://www.woot.com) (<http://www.woot.com>) has some great deals on random items
- [YSMARKO](http://www.ysmarko.com) (<http://www.ysmarko.com>) is a online blog that often makes me think about new uses for existing technologies
- [Simple Youth Ministry](http://www.simplyyouthministry.com) (<http://www.simplyyouthministry.com>) has a freebies section that I try to check every once in a while.

Barb Legere brings a rich experience of youth ministry. From the Diocese of Rochester, Barb served the leadership team as chair of the communications and publications coordinating committee, and looks to the following resources to remain grounded in profession and practice.

- *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (United States Catholic Conference, 1997). “I really do grab it, re-read it, and highlight new insights. The three Goals of Ministry with Youth bring me back to my professional ‘soul’ in a heartbeat.”
- *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* (National Association for Lay Ministry, National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 2003). “When I have trouble connecting with how to achieve these goals, the Competency Standards provide a good framework. Just flipping through



the book brings me back to a more objective and professional stance.”

- *All Kids are Our Kids* (Peter L. Benson, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1997). “The work of the Search Institute helps me to remain focused on the positive outcomes that really ring true for me. This book helps me keep the big picture in mind and not get mired down in the millions of small details.”
 - *Thriving in Youth Ministry* (Robert J. McCarty, Saint Mary’s Press, 2005). “This resource is research-based and an easy read. The self-tests at the end of each chapter provide spot-on reflection questions. This would be fantastic to do with a colleague or group of youth ministry leaders.”
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What is your parish or diocese doing that can be shared with other youth ministers? Contact [Mary](#) to see your ideas and resources highlighted and Share Your Bread With the Hungry.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

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Human Resources! Who Do I Ask for Help?

By Faye Abbondanza
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio

Often when we think of looking for resources in ministry, we look to our bookshelves or the internet, but some of our best resources for ministry are people.

St. Paul tells us in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians that each of us has gifts, and each of us is necessary to the proper working of the body of Christ. As Catholic Christians, we know the importance of community. Look to your civic community, colleagues, and parishioners to build relationships that are mutually supportive in your parish work and your personal and spiritual development. Our understanding of interdependence is one of the greatest assets of the church, we are not in this alone.

Since comprehensive youth ministry is our goal, it is important to remember that you do not have to, and should not, do everything yourself. In *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (USCC, 1997), the United States bishops stress that the whole church is responsible for youth ministry. “The comprehensive approach uses all of our resources as a faith community—people, ministries, programs—in a common effort to promote the three goals of the Church’s ministry with adolescents.” Following are suggestions for six of the many groups you can look to for resource persons.



1. The Parish Staff—Large or small, this group shares a diversity of gifts. Use your gifts, and call on others to assist you with theirs. Ask your pastor, music minister, liturgist, pastoral minister, catechetical leader or administrative assistant for their expertise, ideas, cooperation, or feedback. Their involvement in your ministry works to advocate for youth in other areas of parish ministry, as will provide different perspectives for youth ministry.
2. Parents and Other Parishioners—These people can be positive models of the faith and life experience for teens and invaluable resources as catechists, chaperones, project leaders, or a consistent presence at your gatherings. Look for family, intergenerational, and multicultural experiences for this group to share with youth. This group can also serve as a pool for developing mentoring relationships with young people.
3. Youth—Do not forget the young people with whom you work. Teens will provide insights into youth culture and trends, develop leadership skills for peer ministry, and assist those of us who are technology challenged with PowerPoint presentations, web pages, DVD players, sound systems, etc. Youth who are visibly involved in liturgical ministries, parish organizations, service projects, and leadership also provide a ministry of witness to the faith community.
4. Civic Community—Look to your local public servants and professionals for their expertise and collaboration. Some of these resource people include police and fire departments, healthcare workers, college professors, schoolteachers and administrators, coaches, and social service workers. Many programs offered through these professionals will work hand-in-hand with your ministry. You may even discover that some of these civic connections are members of your faith community.
5. Co-Workers in the Vineyard—Colleagues from other parishes and churches can share ideas, volunteers, and sometimes, financial support with your ministry. Sharing ideas, successes and even failures with others can help in planning and accomplishing some of your ministry goals. Do not forget colleagues you have met through professional



organizations, like NACYML, and conferences such as the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry. Phone calls, e-mail, chat rooms, and support groups are some ways to tap into a wealth of knowledge, ministry experience, and encouragement of colleagues.

6. Diocesan Staff—Do not overlook this valuable resource to your ministry. Look to your diocesan youth ministry office for assistance with training, support, networking opportunities, guidelines, and suggestions for ministry. Other diocesan offices such as Catholic Charities, family life, religious education, pro-life, vocations, and others will provide advice, presenters, evaluation tools, and other connections to assist in your ministry.

Do not try to do it all alone. Comprehensive youth ministry is the responsibility of the whole church. Use your gifts wisely, and seek resource persons who assist in making your ministry fruitful. For your own sense of balance, and the best use of your gifts, combine your gifts with the gifts of others to minister effectively.

Special Drawing for Readers of the NACYML Newsletter

If you are reading this section of the newsletter, you are eligible to enter a drawing for a one year NACYML membership. All you have to do to be entered into the drawing is send an e-mail with your name and NACYML membership number to the NFCYM/NACYML Office at matthewr@nfcym.org. In the subject line of your e-mail indicate that it is for the **NACYML Newsletter Drawing**.

All e-mail entries received by **October 1, 2007** will be entered into the drawing for a free NACYML membership. One winner will be chosen from all entries. You can either give the free membership to a colleague or keep it yourself to extend your membership another year! Congratulations to **JACKIE HOPPER** of Risen Christ Catholic Community in Boise, Idaho! Jackie was the lucky winner of the NACYML polo shirt, having responded to the announcement of the raffle in the last issue of the NACYML Newsletter.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

September 2007

Tangible Media Resources for Youth Ministry

*By Kelly Munsee
St. Charles Catholic Church
Kettering, Ohio*

It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since I wrote about the top ten things that new youth ministry leaders need to know to get started in their ministry. In that article I included some of my favorite 'must have' resources to get started. Here are some more tangible media sources to help you in your ministry. They range from free to minimal cost, and all contain great stuff.

IT (Innovative Tools)

A wonderful resource that addresses topics from A-Z about the Christian Faith, [IT by Group Publishing](http://www.group.com) (<http://www.group.com>) comes with three volumes of ideas and a CD for your computer. All you have to do is search for a topic or activity using a keyword and the group activity will appear on your screen. The topics are not necessarily written from a Catholic perspective, so you may have to make adjustments to reflect our Catholic beliefs. (\$90.00)

OmegaRock.com

[OmegaRock.com](http://www.omegarock.com) (<http://www.omegarock.com>) is an online Catholic radio station. The station plays contemporary Christian music from Catholic artists and other mainstream Christian musicians.



The Journal of Student Ministries

This journal, published by [Youth Specialties](http://www.youthspecialties.com) (<http://www.youthspecialties.com>), comes out six times per year and includes articles related to youth and campus ministry as well as articles about surviving and thriving in youth ministry. It is a great, practical resource. (\$40.00 subscription fee.)

Youth Specialties.com

[Youth Specialties](http://www.youthspecialties.com) (<http://www.youthspecialties.com>) website contains articles and ideas for youth ministry. It includes pod casts by experts in the field who offer insight on many topics such as issues with middle school teens and the changing face of youth ministry. Visit the website for their free resources.

The Source for Youth Ministry.com

[The Source for Youth Ministry.com](http://www.thesource4ym.com) (<http://www.thesource4ym.com>) offers group games and icebreaker ideas. You will find indoor and outdoor activities and for large and small groups. I use many of these games because they keep young people involved and we all love the element of surprise. I actually have kids asking at the beginning of every group, "What are we doing today?" I always respond the same way, "I guess you will have to wait and see." (Free)

Jesus Said It and Jesus Did It

[Group Publishing](http://www.group.com) (<http://www.group.com>) provides two separate six-week, experiential, multimedia, small group Bible Studies. Each explores what Jesus said or did in his years here on earth and challenges us to live what Jesus said or did. These kits include cool tangible exercises to drive the point home. Again,

you may have to make some adjustments in order to fully reflect our Catholic beliefs but the exercises can spark some great conversation. (\$59.99 each)

Throw and Tell Balls

These are inflatable balls that have questions written all over them. The ball is thrown and the question that is under the left thumb of the person who catches it is the one that is answered. One ball is strictly used to break the ice. The other contains questions that encourage young people to go a little deeper. Available through [Group Publishing](http://www.group.com) (<http://www.group.com>). (\$9.99 each or both for \$14.99)

Center for Parent/Youth Understanding

[Center for Parent/Youth Understanding](http://www.cpyu.org/default.aspx) website (<http://www.cpyu.org/default.aspx>) contains articles and pod casts about youth trends and culture, and strengthening the bonds between young people and their parents. It also reviews the latest media releases that impact our young people. (Free)

There you have it! There are a lot more resources out there and I know that I have only scratched the surface. I just wanted to share some that have proven to be helpful for me in ministry and that I use quite regularly. I hope they prove to be helpful for you as well.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

September 2007

Call Me, Call Me Any Time

By Jenn Ledonne

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
St. Mary's Parish, Kentucky

A cell phone is a crucial link to parents in case of an emergency. It is a lifeline after a long day when a teen is waiting for a ride. It is a working tool when youth call or text to see what's coming up on the calendar of events.

We all have certain numbers programmed into our phones. But if a youth is truly in crisis, will we have the phone numbers needed to help?

A teen comes to you and confides that he/she has been trying to lose weight. You need to know so that you do not become concerned when you notice that teen skipping snack time. After the teen walks away, a group of his/her friends approach you with concerns that their friend has not been eating for some time. Your inner alarm begins to sound.

Something needs to be done, but what? You know this situation requires counseling beyond your training and experience. Begin by talking with the youth and his/her parents about your concerns, and have information ready for the parents and youth. Have access to numbers and programs that are likely to be needed in this situation.

This might mean programming crisis numbers into your cell directory. If you do not care to include these numbers in your cell directory, consider making them a permanent attachment in your calendar, lesson planner, and carry them in your wallet. The goal is to have them at the ready when you need them.

Check and update your list of numbers each year. It only takes a few minutes and a volunteer might be happy to assist with a task that will help those truly in need. Local phone numbers to consider including in your cell phone list:

- Adolescent health center
- Child abuse hotline
- Diocesan youth ministry office
- Drugs/alcohol abuse hotline
- Eating disorder hotline
- Grief support hotline
- Local children's hospital
- Local psychologist who takes emergency calls from youth ministers
- Pharmacy
- Poison control center
- Pregnancy hotline
- Project Rachel
- Rape crisis care center
- Runaway hotline
- Social service agency
- Suicide prevention hotline

Following is a partial list of some national toll free hotlines. Additionally, the website of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry lists numerous national resources that would be good to keep



handy. Visit the [Resource Section](http://www.nfcym.org/resources/index.htm) of the website (<http://www.nfcym.org/resources/index.htm>).

Girls and Boys Town National Hotline 800-448-3000

The Girls and Boys Town National Hotline is a 24-hour crisis, resource and referral line. Trained counselors can respond to your questions every day of the week, 365 days a year. We can help teens and parents with suicide prevention, depression, school issues, parenting troubles, runaways, relationship problems, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, chemical dependency, anger and much more.



Child Find America Hotline 800-292-9688

Child Find, Inc. is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to the prevention and resolution of child abduction, and offers America's families free investigation and location services, kidnap prevention programs, referral and support services, and much more.

Child Abuse Hotline 800-422-4453

Children of the Night Crisis Hotline 800-551-1300

Private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to assisting youth who are forced to prostitute on the streets for food to eat and a place to sleep. Resources and rescue programs to get teens away from prostitution.

Covenant House Hotline 800-999-9999

Kids, Need to Talk? Are you or a friend looking for answers to tough questions? Covenant House Nineline can help with a variety of issues and problems.

Youth Suicide Prevention Hotline 800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 800-843-5678

Al-Anon Family Hotline 800-356-9996

Phoenix House Drug Hotline 800-662-4357

Phoenix House is the nation's largest non profit substance abuse services organization and has 100 drug and alcohol treatment programs in nine states: California, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont.

National Health Information Center 800-336-4797

The NHIC is a health information referral service. NHIC puts health professionals and consumers who have health questions in touch with those organizations that are best able to provide answers.

National Sexually Transmitted Diseases Hotline 800-227-8922

A service of the centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Youth Change 800-545-5736

Youth serving professionals (teachers, counselors, principals, youth ministers, etc.) receive intervention ideas for youth problems. Help is provided by a Master's-level mental health professional with decades of service with children.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse 800-638-8736

Pathway Family Center (Drug Abuse) 800-261-4605

If you have more numbers or resources that should be included in this list, please share them in the NACYML discussion forum.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

Ready, Set, Serve!

By Catherine T. Werner
St. Joseph's Parish
Toms River, New Jersey

Twenty-two years old, the ink was barely dry on my college diploma when I officially started as director of youth ministry in my parish. Armed with a notebook full of ideas, a heart ready to serve, and a head full of idealism I set out to change the world, one teenager at a time. While I still hold many of the ideals that I started this youth ministry journey with, I have learned that sometimes it takes a few props to keep things rolling smoothly. Following are some things that I would be hard pressed to do youth ministry without.

1. M&Ms chocolate candies are a staple in our snack cabinet and in my desk! Not only are they an excellent snack, they can also be used for several ice breaker games. Pass around a big bowl of M&Ms and ask your teens to take some. Some will take a small amount, while others grab a fistful. For every piece they take, the teens must share something about themselves with the group. You can also have each candy color correspond with a question or talk point. (Ex. Blue = tell about a time you were proud of yourself, Red = who do you call when you need to vent?) A jar of M&Ms on your desk instantly draws people in and sometimes it is those three minute conversations that are the start of a connection.
2. We all want our teens to be familiar and comfortable with the Word of God. Having several Bibles available for the teens to use gives them the chance for hands on Scripture experience. It is amazing how many of today's youth are unfamiliar with the Bible. Review with your group some Bible basics including how to look up a verse and then give one to find. Encourage your youth to read along from the Bible during your prayer services. Hearing the Scripture is great, but some people absorb things better by seeing the written word. Having options will help ensure that the message of God's Word gets through.
3. Whenever a new person comes to our youth program, I have them fill out an information sheet that includes the basics (name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail address) as well as their birthday, their parents' full names, the names and ages of any siblings, their grade and school, hobbies and interests and what church they attend. These forms are kept in a binder so that there is easy access to the information. Whenever I have a question regarding a teen or a family, I can just turn to the binder. This has come in very handy especially for those situations when a teen has a different last name than his or her parents.
4. A well stocked first aid kit is worth its weight in gold! Be sure to keep a supply of band aids in assorted



sizes, gauze pads, adhesive cloth tape, ace bandages, antiseptics, antibiotic ointments, tweezers, non-latex gloves, instant ice packs, contact lens solution, sun block, bug spray, as well as feminine hygiene products. Let your teens and adults know where the kit is kept so that there is no question about where to go in an emergency. Taking a class in CPR and first aid is also a wise move for anyone working with young people!

5. Candles will help set a reverent mood for prayer and can transform any place into a quiet, peaceful setting. Use a large candle as a focal point or give each young person a small votive candle to hold during prayer. A friend of mine carves a new prayer candle for his youth group each year during their annual summer retreat. This candle is used throughout the year as a reminder of what they experienced at the retreat. Candles also come in handy should the power go out!
6. Duct tape has come in handy so many times at youth ministry functions! We have used it to secure the



luggage carrier while on a mission trip, to hang banners at the diocesan youth conference, and to repair broken hoses at our car wash fundraisers. Keep a roll near by and you will not be sorry.

7. A good youth minister needs to be prepared. So what do you do when you are the one with the emergency? Have a list of adults you can call to cover for you should an illness or emergency arise in your life. Knowing that you do not have to scramble for a phone number can make a hectic time a bit easier.

Flexibility is essential in youth ministry. Meetings get cancelled, locations get switched, and people do not always live up to their responsibilities. But it is how we handle these situations that allow us to remain sane. There are times when we all need to remember that our plan is not always God's plan. So do your best to be prepared for whatever may come, and be sure to keep some M&M's handy!

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