

## EVALUATING THE SITUATION

### *a) Young People, the Church, and Society*

**Q1).** *In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?*

Formal Parish youth groups in our diocese play a big part in the Church's connection with young people and understanding their lived situations. There are number of programs offered in our parishes that incorporate retreats, mission experiences and faith formation. Creating both a flexible and adaptable program structure that addresses the changing needs and life situations of today's young people and their families. This allows opportunities to connect with young people outside of the parish walls providing a safe and non-judgmental environment for youth to share their lived situations.

At the diocesan level the office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry works with parishes providing developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families. Occurring through diocesan sponsored retreats and outreach programs throughout the year.

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**Q2).** *What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in your country today?*

Challenges:

- Breakdown of family and community
- Moral Relativism
- An understanding and practice of the faith
- A conflict between science and faith
- Social Media

Opportunities:

- Use of technology and the ability for immediate connection
- The ability to apply their talents in service to others
- The potential to unite the world
- Are a significant group in the world
- Greater access to higher education

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**Q3).** *What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success within the Church, and why?*

- Parish Youth Groups: building of relationships. Bringing adolescents into parish life grounded in the faith. Giving foundations for leadership, collaboration, and theological reflection rooted in the experience of faith
- Outreach Missions: building of partnerships mobilizing the community in a common effort to build a healthier community and promote positive adolescent development
- National Youth Events and Conferences: an experience of the larger church outside the walls of the parish. Seeing the Church alive and a sense of solidarity
- Youth Retreats: allows breaking away from daily tasks and reconnect with the Church
- Scouting: alerting to the whole community to its responsibility, drawing from gifts, skills and talents. Encouraging and empowering the community
- Newman Centers: a history of attracting a critical mass of young people concentrating on ministering to them

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**Q4).** What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success outside the Church, and why?

- Sporting/ entertainment events: provides an opportunity to see Christ in everything and to take the Word of God with you in everyday life
- Concerts: the ability to gather and hang out and feel part of something. Momentarily removes one from issues allowing the music to take them away
- School Activities: meeting the youth where they are connecting with members of the community
- School Clubs: reinforces the sense of belonging; feelings of inclusiveness and acceptance. Community focused.
- Theology on Tap: outside but related to the Church; providing for intergenerational relationships with rich resources to learn the story of the Catholic Faith experientially and to develop a sense of belonging to the Church. A perspective on the Faith through the experiences of another

**Q5).** *What do young people really ask of the Church in your country today?*

Young people seem to have a desire to be listened to by the Church and for their experiences to be a starting point to talk about God. They wish to engage in conversation concerning the basic teachings again and re-discover them as young adults.

They are asking for authentic relationships and spiritual guidance and the truth; desiring openness, acceptance and broader understanding of various lifestyles.

A desire for the Church to show them what it means to be “Catholic.” Looking to the Church to be prophetic in times of injustice and to show leadership in times of ambiguity underpinning a basic framework where they can explore being Catholic, thinking Catholic, loving like a Catholic and acting like a Catholic.

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**Q6).** *What possibilities for participation exist in your country for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?*

- Diocesan programs and retreats
- Mission Trips
- National and Regional youth events (i.e. National Catholic Youth Conference)
- Lay organizations, movements and associations
- Church committees

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**Q7).** *How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?*

- Youth Ministry leadership attends school events as a group and constantly inviting not just Catholics but all to come; taking the faith to the streets, to the schools, to the athletic fields affirming the youth that they are missed and needed.
- Community outreach evangelizing all those encountered. Diversify and host events that are not blatantly faith-based.
- Social media outlets marketing the promotion and publicize events both “inside church” and “outside church.”
- Personal invitations to include through family members

*b) Pastoral Vocational Programs for Young people*

**Q8).** *How are families and communities involved in the vocational discernment of young people?*

- Parents witnessing how God has worked in their lives and is working in their lives, they witness to the call to be a disciple; living as the example. Naming that they have been called to discipleship and to show how this shapes the direction of their lives.
- Encouraging active Catholic imagination around the stories of the Saints and how they responded to God's call.
- Parish prayer groups, vocation programs and catechesis
- Focus of parish discussion, retreats, and mission opportunities.
- A Focus of parish youth group curriculum and events.



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**Q9).** *How do schools and universities or other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment?*

- Our Catholic School and Universities provide opportunities for young people to envision, concretely, living by another setoff values. Catholic high schools by drawing students into service and campus ministry activities helping them see their call to build up God's Reign.

As they work with students entering a phase of looking for college or vocational programs, teachers and school personnel encourage students to connect their passions with their faith.

- Catholic Universities provide students with opportunities to prioritize developing a critical mind, deepening their capacities for self-reflection. Building hubs where students learn and commit themselves to working for justice. Through theology classes, both required and elective, they open students up to discussions where young people can be moved and challenged into a more mature faith life.
- Catholic Universities or in Catholic campus ministry programs (Newman Centers and FOCUS), young people also find mentors and wisdom figures who encourage and empower them to take bold steps in discipleship.
- Our Catholic schools allow faith to flourish through relational ministry. These relationships prove vital in helping young people discern and deepen their call to discipleship.

**Q10).** *In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world?*

- Technical changes have put an increased demand on the effectiveness of ministry to young people; resulting in the applying or incorporating the use of social media outlets in day to day ministry in parishes (i.e. phone apps, facebook, Instagram, email) as a way to connect or reconnect with the present generation.
- Providing sanctuaries of silence, offering opportunities to spend time with God in quiet, away from omnipresent distractions and noise.

**Q11).** *How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become part of ordinary pastoral practice?*

There should be total pastor/parish support and invitation encouraging young people to get involved; the building up, encouraging and refreshing of the youth in the parish.

This should be a lived experience for young people bringing the message back home to share with their own faith community. It then becomes a parish initiative creating events supporting and keeping the message alive. Challenging those attending to take on a leadership role.

Taking advantage of programming and materials offered by USCCB and other national organizations for those that feel it cost prohibitive to attend and create the experience within parishes and the diocese.

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**Q12).** *In what manner is your diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational program for young people?*

- Collaboration between the Diocesan Offices for Vocations and Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry with/in all diocesan youth retreats. Seminarians are actively involved in the delivery and participation of these retreats. The Diocesan Vocations Director encourages and permits seminarians to be present at other diocesan events focused on young people.
- Monthly meetings of diocesan youth leaders discussing pastoral and strategic planning practices.
- Diocesan Young Adult Speaker Series examining various relatable topics throughout the year. These events feature diocesan clergy as speakers.

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*c) Pastoral Care Workers with Young People*

**Q13).** *How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide personal spiritual guidance?*

- Faith Formation Leaders provide guidance during sessions and there is an open door policy with the ability to email and text for those who prefer not to communicate face to face.
- Confession, through example and adult formation
- Many Priests lack the availability to provide spiritual guidance

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**Q14).** *What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance?*

- Conference and diocesan programs; different events outside the diocese, training occurs within the diocese, catechist formation days and retreats.
- Diocesan Youth Leader Professional Development workshops
- Diocesan Catechist Certification Program

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**Q15).** *What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?*

- Guidance from priest and seminary formation advisors
- Spiritual Direction
- Diocese Seminarian support group
- Many are unsure

*d) Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas*

**America:**

*a).* How does your community care for young people who experience extreme violence (domestic violence, gangs, prison, drug and alcohol addiction) and accompany them in various ways in their lives?

- In the public arena through social workers and counselors placed in our public schools.
- Parish communities offer outreach programs (i.e. prison ministry, and alcoholic and drug recovery).
- Catholic Action Center serving the needs of the larger metropolitan area. The center is a house of hospitality that welcomes all in need. Offering services for job placement, advanced education a refuge for those with limited or no options.
- Fr. Beiting Appalachia Mission Center serving in eastern Kentucky through the offering of summer camps, monthly Bible studies for youth and young people.
- Catholic Charities counseling programs and services



**America (cont'd):**

***b). what formation is offered to support the engagement of young people in society and civil life, for the common good?***

- Through parish youth groups utilizing both flexible and adaptable programming addressing the changing needs and life situations. Reaching young people where they are developmentally, spiritually and physically.
- Parish Bible Study groups
- Newman Clubs and campus ministry and missionaries (i.e. FOCUS).
- Community collaboration building relationships among families, school, churches and organizations that mobilize the community in a common effort

**America (cont'd):**

*c). In a world which is greatly secularized, what pastoral activities are most effective for continuing the journey of faith after the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation)?*

- Parish youth groups focused on some group formation focused on intentional discipleship and continuing formation
- Youth group retreats both at parish and diocesan level.
- Any activity that allows young people to interact and learn “why” the Church teaches “what” she teaches. Reflecting what is means to live out the Catholic faith.
- Parish small groups.
- Parish outreach program reflecting the Church in action.
- Parish Bible studies

## SHARING ACTIVITIES

**Q1).** *List the main types of pastoral activity in accompaniment and vocational discernment in your present situation.*

- Faith Formation programs both parish and diocesan lead.
- Parish youth groups.
- Diocesan youth rally and retreats.
- Young Adult talks and activities series focused on current issues.
- Individual Spiritual direction.

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**Q2).** *Choose three activities you consider the most interesting and relevant to share with the universal Church, and present it according to the following format:*

- a) **Description:** *In a few sentences, roughly describe the activity. Who are the leading characters? How does the activity take place? Where? Etc.*
  
- b) **Analysis:** *Evaluate the activity, even in layman's terms, for a better understanding of the important elements: what are the goals? What is the theoretical basis? What are the most interesting insight? How have they developed? Etc.*
  
- c) **Evaluation:** *What are the goals? If not achieved, why? strengths and weaknesses? what are the consequences on the social, cultural and ecclesial levels? Why and in what way is the activity important / formative? etc.*

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Activity #1:

a). **Mission Encounter Program** :( Experiencing God in the People and Land of Appalachia) – the parish hosts young adults and adult groups that desire to experience.

The key players are those who choose to come and experience the encounter.

b). the program goal is to provide encounter with God through the people they meet in Eastern Kentucky.

The Mission Encounter takes root in the reality that God encounters and loves us first. God speaks to us throughout our own life stories. Building on what Pope Francis calls a “culture of encounter.”

This program combines elements that are common for service trips, community building exercises and encounter retreats. Combining these elements allows for an encounter with God to foster community and enflames our baptismal call --- missionary disciples.

C). the goals are multi-faceted and still developing; hoping that these experiences build community and a culture of encounter for both our hosting parish and visiting groups. The work projects in the community help grow the Church outside of Church.

Young adults want to be rooted in an intimate community, nourished as missionary disciples and sent to encounter God and to build up a culture of encounter.

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Activity #2:

**a).** i.d. 9:16 : an online streaming event with groups all over the country dialing in. Generally the group of young adults starts with Mass at a neutral location, and then food and fellowship and the talk—streamed online.

The main characters are from Ann Arbor Michigan and volunteer young adults from the diocese.

**b).** the mission or goal of i.d. 9:16 is to form young adults into intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.

Through monthly meetings, small faith sharing Discipleship groups, and a commitment to prayer, this young adult group seeks to live the life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. The group is founded on the four pillars of taught by St. Pope John Paul II: conversion, communion, orthodoxy and mission; a responding to Christ's call "to go and make disciples of all nations."

**c).** An opportunity for community building, the sharing of life experiences and the faith combined with elements of formation on relatable topics.

It is an important because of the connections and networking within the young adult community.

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**Activity #3:**

a) **Parish Youth Group Nights** (*Life Teen Ministries*): A weekly gathering of middle school and high school parish youth gathering in designated space within the parish grounds. Most Life Teen Programs utilize multiple events during the week, such as Bible Studies, social events, and the like to provide teenagers with healthy and holy activities to take part in during the week that will not only strengthen their bonds with each other, but will strengthen their relationship with God as well. The main characters are made up of by the youth minister and the Core Team; adults, young adults and college students.

b). the flow of each individual Life follows the same format but will focus on varied topics each semester:

- **Gather**- *this part of the night welcomes the teens capture their attention and interest and sets the tone for the night.*
- **Proclaim** - *this is the portion of the night making the word of God relevant to the teens.*
- **Break** – *this is the opportunity for the teens to process the topic of the nights giving them a voice and allowing them to explore how the topic applies to their lives.*
- **Send** – *this is the wrap up of the night giving teen’s practical concrete ways to live out the message of the night.*

c). the goals of “Life Nights” come in three varieties: catechetical, issue, and social. All focused on bringing teens into an encounter with Jesus Christ.