

PROPOSAL FOR YOUTH MINISTRY STRATEGY

Youth Group or Youth Ministry?

Activ8 suggests that this is the first question to be answered – an Archdiocese of Sydney initiative.

A youth ministry is a much wider concept which, in the Nowra/Shoalhaven context, might be more suitable to our diverse parish.

A youth ministry might include activities across a spectrum including:

- Social action
- Catechesis
- Service
- Prayer
- Scripture reflection
- Leadership training
- Letter writing
- Fundraising
- Visitation
- Evangelisation
- Mass and Liturgy participation
- A combination of the above

These activities could be undertaken by a youth group, a group of youths or individual youths and in either gathered or non-gathered programmes.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF THE NOWRA PARISH

To identify what we need and what we can hope to provide we will need to undertake a process of research, consultation and planning. Activ8 suggests a 10 point appraisal to create an effective youth ministry.

1. Identify whose task is Youth Ministry within the Parish
2. Call together an interested group to work as a leadership team
3. Assess the assets and gifts of the Parish
4. Assess the needs and desires of our Youth in the Parish
5. Research available resources and sources of help (eg CEO, Diocesan resources)
6. Select the most appropriate Structure your youth ministry
7. Form the leaders with sound faith understanding, pastoral and communication skills.
8. Provide ongoing support, guidance and mentoring
9. Build your youth ministry in realistic stages
10. Approach young people to be involved.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

Based on the above it is suggested that the following steps guide the process:

- Resolve to implement a youth management strategy (done 10/2/08)
- Form an interim Youth Ministry Group (YMG)
- YMG meets and co-ordinates survey of Parish Community (including St John's students)
- YMG reports to PP and Parish Council
- YMG reports to Parish through Parish centres (at a Mass)
- Youth Ministry Sunday event scheduled for each parish centre.
- Youth Ministry Day Event (calling together the youth of the parish)

Resolution to support a youth ministry strategy

The Parish Council Meeting on 10 February resolved to create a working group of the Council and delegated to the group responsibility for overseeing the project.

The working group is tasked, in liaison with Fr Pat to identify an interim youth ministry group to supervise the administration of the project.

Ideally, the interim YMG needs to have representatives from the following:

- Clergy
- Parish Council
- St John's
- Young Adults Group
- Music/Liturgy group
- Youth Members
- Parent Members

The last two groups would be drawn from each of the Parish Centres.

Role of the interim Youth Ministry Group (YMG)

In consultation with the priests of the parish, the Council will appoint the interim Youth Ministry Group. It will have a defined and documented purpose

Adopting the Catholic Youth Ministry's Parish Pack model (the Archdiocese of Sydney program), the YMG will identify and initiate the distribution of surveys amongst the parish community, it will source relevant Parish information and liaise and consult with relevant stakeholders. Survey and other information will be distributed throughout the Parish centres and the responses will be analysed and collated by the YMG.

The YMG will, in consultation with the diocesan Youth Ministry Team and with Fr Pat, prepare and co-ordinate an event focused on youth planned to occur in each Parish centre on the same Sunday with the aim for each centre to celebrate its own Youth Ministry Sunday event, expected to occur after the WYD08 events in July.

The YMG will then co-ordinate a Parish wide event involving the whole parish calling together the Youth of the Parish to participate in the Youth Ministry Event Day, being a day of planning and celebration likely to occur in late 2008.

YMG reports to Parish through Parish centres (at Mass)

The YMG will report its findings to each Parish centre and the Parish will extend a personal invitation to Parishioners (especially youth) to participate in a Youth Ministry Sunday event to be held at as many of the Parish centres as practical/possible.

Youth Ministry Day Event

The Youth Ministry Day Event will be a Parish event to be convened at a central place (eg Nowra or Berry). The purpose of the day is to identify the way forward and to appoint the Youth Ministry Group which will be commissioned to implement the process.

The process may involve a parish renewal type event with both plenary and workshop sessions leading to the creation of the documents which the participants at the event will adopt and implement.

Call for volunteers and interested people

We have a wide and diverse Parish. It should be possible to have an eclectic/enriching and exciting mix of strategies focused on our Youth. If we are lucky we might have projects and events designed to give effect to the following possible "Ministries" within the Parish:

- Advocacy
- Catechesis
- Community life
- Evangelisation
- Justice and service
- Leadership and development
- Pastoral care
- Prayer and worship

We will need the support of the whole Parish, St John's and possibly even the CEO and the Diocese.

The task for the Parish now is to decide what form of youth ministry is needed and, more importantly, to decide to take action.

Join us and help us make this a reality