



Youth Summit

Video Guide

For Teen Small Groups

In all its activities, the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.

-Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, #28



DIOCESE OF
Jefferson City

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONDUCTING THIS SESSION

CONDUCTING THE VIRTUAL SMALL GROUP SESSION

1. Arrange a time to meet virtually with your teen small group and adult leaders from your parish. Use a platform such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Go to Meeting, or Microsoft Teams to conduct your meeting. (Contact the Office of Youth Ministry if you need help setting this up).
2. All participants should have their own copy of this guide. Adult leaders should also have a copy of the Parish Insight Report. Teens need not have a copy of this.
3. The adult leader should welcome everyone to the virtual meeting. Using the “share screen” capability, the adult leader should begin the video so all in the meeting can see and hear the video at the same time. If connection is delayed, participants can view each video on their own devices and then rejoin the conversation.
4. After each segment you will be prompted to pause the video and discuss some questions. Teens should discuss and share their thoughts. Adult leaders should help facilitate and take notes on what the teens say.
5. When the discussion has concluded for a section, go back to the video, share screen, and click play to view the next session.

TIPS FOR THE VIRTUAL SMALL GROUP

- The small group session will take an estimated 120 minutes to complete. This includes viewing time and discussion. If your group needs to do this over two sessions feel free.
- Teens: be open, honest, candid and constructive in what you share. Adults: Guide conversation, clarify questions, and capture their insights. Avoid an impulse to correct, defend, or impose your point of view on the conversation.

TURNING IN YOUR PARISH INSIGHT REPORT

1. Adult leaders will gather the insights from the teen discussion and write them in the Parish Insight Report. Try to capture the main ideas from what was shared and write those in a coherent, concise, and accurate way.
2. Once your report is finished, submit one copy to your parish priest. Submit the other copy to the Office of Youth Ministry and Religious Ed in whatever format is best for you.

Schwartz Catholic Center
Office of Youth Ministry and Religious Ed
2207 W. Main St.
Jefferson City, MO 65110
Via email: jdelaporte@diojeffcity.org or Fax: 573-635-2286

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR VIRTUAL MEETING

SOME NOTES FOR ADULT LEADERS

1. Adult leaders participating in the online meeting should have undergone VIRTUS training.
2. There should be more than one adult participating in the meeting. Even if the other adult does not facilitate, there should be another adult present in the virtual space. Please make sure your pastor is aware of the platform by which you plan to conduct the teen session.
3. Adult leaders should solicit permission from teen parents authorizing their child to participate in this meeting with you. This should be gathered in writing. You could solicit permission through an email to parents or set up an online form that a parent could read and sign such as a Google Form. Communicate to parents the date, time, and purpose of this virtual meeting. Share the names of other adults that will be present at the meeting. Share the virtual platform that you will be using.

SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear (PARENT NAME),

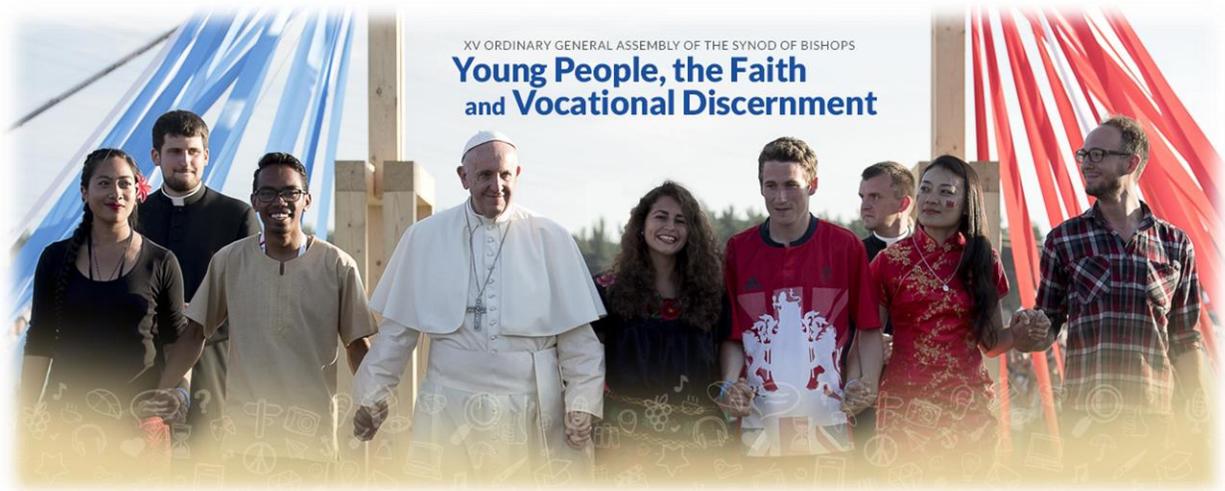
Thank you for allowing (CHILD NAME) to participate in the youth summit, which had been scheduled for May 17th. This event has been cancelled due to the outbreak. However, we are still planning to involve your child in our parish planning process. Thus, I would like to invite them to participate in a “virtual small group” on (DATE/TIME). I will facilitate along with (CO-CHAPERONE). We will be using (ONLINE PLATFORM) to conduct our meeting.

I would like to get your permission to allow (CHILD NAME) to participate in this virtual meeting. This meeting will be safe, secure, and viewable only to the teens and adults in attendance. Please respond as soon as you are able giving permission for them to participate. If you have any questions about the meeting or about virtual safety please don't hesitate to contact me.

SAMPLE E-PERMISSION FORM (SENT IN A LINK TO PARENTS)

I authorize my child to participate in the virtual, youth summit small group session taking place (DATE/TIME) using (ONLINE PLATFORM). I understand that multiple adult chaperones will be facilitating this meeting involving my child, and that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that this meeting will be safe, secure, and viewable only to those in attendance. I authorize my child to participate by typing my name in the box below.

SIGNATURE BOX



64. ...We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. **They are its present;** even now, they are helping to enrich it. Young people are no longer children. They are at a time of life when they begin to assume a number of responsibilities, sharing alongside adults in the growth of the family, society and the Church.

37. Christ's Church can always yield to the temptation to lose enthusiasm because she no longer hears the Lord calling her to take the risk of faith, to give her all without counting the dangers; she can be tempted to revert to seeking a false, worldly form of security. **Young people can help keep her young.** They can stop her from becoming corrupt; they can keep her moving forward, prevent her from being proud and sectarian, help her to be poorer and to bear better witness, to take the side of the poor and the outcast, to fight for justice and humbly to let herself be challenged. Young people can offer the Church the beauty of youth by renewing her ability to "rejoice with new beginnings, to give unreservedly of herself, to be renewed and to set out for ever greater accomplishments".



38. **Those of us who are no longer young need to find ways of keeping close to the voices and concerns of young people.** "Drawing together creates the conditions for the Church to become a place of dialogue and a witness to life-giving fraternity". **We need to make more room for the voices of young people to be heard:** "Listening makes possible an exchange of gifts in a context of empathy... At the same time, it sets the conditions for a preaching of the Gospel that can touch the heart truly, decisively and fruitfully".

- Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, #64, 37-38

BETTER TOGETHER! A VISION OF PARISH LIFE

...WITHOUT A VISION THE PEOPLE WILL PERISH –PROVERBS 29:18

POPE FRANCIS: A VISION OF JOY, MISSION AND OUTREACH

“The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities, the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.”

-Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, #28



TRENDS AND TRIALS

Decline in priests, practice and trust

- The Catholic Church in the US and in our diocese has seen a sharp decline in the number of active priests and consecrated religious serving in the church.
- Sacramental practices in our diocese has declined in the past 20 years, especially in weekly Mass attendance. Since 2001, we have seen a 29% decline in Mass attendance despite our general catholic population remaining relatively flat. (Diocesan Study)
- The twin crisis of clergy sexual abuse and the abuse of power by Bishops have wounded the presbyterate (the priests of the diocese as a whole) and strongly discouraged the faithful, jeopardizing their relationship with the Church and their trust in her leaders. (McKnight)

The Exodus of Young Catholics

- People are moving from rural to urban areas with small towns seeing declining populations.
- Almost half of Catholics who are now unaffiliated (48%) left Catholicism before age 18. (Pew)
- Nearly 80 percent of cradle Catholics are no longer Catholic by the age of 23. (Weddell)
- On average, 22 million Americans lose their Catholic faith in their teens or college years. (projectYM)
- Of the 1 million Confirmed each year, 85% will stop practicing their faith within 7 years. (Kelly)
- The average age in which a young person no longer considers themselves Catholic is 13 years old. (Going, Going, Gone).

BISHOP MCKNIGHT: A VISION OF “BETTER TOGETHER”



“...In facing the challenges before our local Church, the Diocese of Jefferson City, it is my firm belief we can overcome attitudes of scarcity and decline **by increasing our collaboration and encouraging a missionary mindset** among our Catholics. It’s been my experience that if we think change is something negative and to be delayed or avoided, we often assume resources are scarce and no one is available to assist us. For us as a Church, this attitude often results in parishes and dioceses that are inward-oriented, not missionary — or outward — focused.”

-Bishop Shawn McKnight, Making Connections, October 17, 2019

STEWARDSHIP

AS EACH ONE HAS RECEIVED A GIFT, USE IT TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER AS GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD'S VARIED GRACE. – 1 PETER 4:10

ESSENTIAL IDEAS

- Stewardship is a way of life. It is how we live our Christian faith.
- Stewardship is not primarily about what we give, but how we model our lives after Jesus who was steward of all.
- As members of a church and a community, we are caretakers of that community. We have responsibility to care for our community and the community has a responsibility to care for us.
 - We care for our community by offering our time, our gifts and talents, and our money.
 - When we don't take ownership and care for the community the community suffers. Fewer and fewer people are saddled with the cost and responsibility of keeping the parish alive.
- Stewardship should always come from a place of gratitude. We are aware of all the gifts that God has given us, and in gratitude, we give ourselves back to God in return.
- The four major pillars of stewardship are: hospitality, prayer, faith formation, and service. When all or several of these are present at a parish, a healthy spirit of stewardship abides!

SCENARIO

Angie was 16 years old and had just gotten her driver's license. She had not been driving but a few weeks when she got into an accident coming home from school. She ended up staying at the hospital for 2 nights, and had to take one full week off from school to recover. When word spread of her accident, members of her parish responded. People she had only seen at Mass came to visit her in the hospital or sent cards. Some brought food over to the house. Others posted prayers for her on the parish Facebook page. Father even offered a Mass for her recovery. "Wow," Angie said. "I never thought my church cared so much for me." When she fully recovered, Angie felt that she wanted to give back to her parish after receiving so many blessings. Angie was a talented musician and decided to join the choir. She also joined the Social Concerns Committee so she could care for others in the same manner she was.

CO-RESPONSIBILITY

FOR AS IN ONE BODY WE HAVE MANY PARTS, AND ALL THE PARTS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, THOUGH MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST AND INDIVIDUALLY PARTS OF ONE ANOTHER. - ROMANS 12:4-5

ESSENTIAL IDEAS

- Co-responsibility means that lay people and clergy work together to run the parish. They are partners in the parish in service to one another.
- The pastor seeks input and help from the parishioners through councils and advisory groups. He sees his job as servant to the people. He is a servant leader, caretaker, and animator of the faithful. A pastor shares responsibility for the parish with the parishioners in the community.
- Co-responsibility means parishioners respond to the pastor's requests and offer input and solutions. They take ownership of the parish, make it their own, and participate.
- When a priest thinks he runs the show by himself, and uses his authority for personal gain, this is called "clericalism." Clericalism is the opposite of co-responsibility!
- When parishioners don't take responsibility for the parish and always defer to whatever Father says or wants there is a lack of co-responsibility. Everything falls to the priest. The people don't take up their baptismal call or the universal call to holiness.

SCENARIO

Father was stressed! He felt like the weight of the world was on his shoulders. He was overseeing three parishes with a 30-minute drive between each. Each parish seemed to have its own challenges, but one thing was consistent. Father felt like he had to do everything! "This place would fall apart without me." Father would say. Every decision, every project, every committee, every dollar had to be overseen by him. Moreover, it seemed impossible to get people to help with anything! The same 10 people did all the work, and many of them had a similar mindset as Father. "This place would fall apart without us!" they would say. Many of the most involved parishioners felt it was all on them to make their parish run. They often complained about others not getting involved. Yet, rarely did Father or parish leaders seek input or help from others. The same ministries and the same leaders had been in place for decades. And when Father would ask for help or input, parish leaders would usually respond, "Whatever you want Father...it's your call...you're the priest."

CHARITY AND MERCY

THIS IS HOW ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. –JOHN 13:35

SO SPEAK AND SO ACT AS PEOPLE WHO WILL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW OF FREEDOM. FOR THE JUDGMENT IS MERCILESS TO ONE WHO HAS NOT SHOWN MERCY; MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGEMENT. – JAMES 2:12-13

ESSENTIAL IDEAS

- Charity and Mercy should help define a parish community.
- Parishes should be centers where people can serve and be served (charity), and experience healing, support, inclusion, and forgiveness (mercy).
- Charity and mercy are works of the Holy Spirit. As disciples we go out and practice those works of charity and mercy as people filled with the Holy Spirit.
- A parish is not a building but a mission. We don't go to a parish. We are parish! Parish is a verb not a noun! When we serve others, work for justice, and improve society we are doing and being "parish". Charity and mercy are outwardly focused. We don't just focus on ourselves. We meet people where they are in the community and in their lives.
- Mercy is all about forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. It is about extending a warm and genuine welcome to people in the midst of the messiness of their lives.
- When people feel welcomed, included, served, and supported our parish is truly a center of charity and mercy. When people feel judged, excluded or ignored, charity and mercy are absent.

SCENARIOS

CHARITY

When Matthew and his family emerged from their basement, they looked out the window with horror. Trees uprooted. Cars overturned. Rooftops collapsed. Windows blown out. They were lucky. The tornado narrowly missed their home. Their neighbors were less fortunate. After taking stock of their own home, Matthew and his family went to their parish to see how they could help. St. Ignatius was prepared to respond to disasters such as this, and people in the community knew that if they needed help in any way they could go to the Catholic Church no matter who they were or what they needed. The parish hall had been turned into an overnight shelter with beds arranged and food prepared. The school gymnasium had been transformed into a certified Red Cross emergency relief station where people could get medical supplies and treatment. The sanctuary was open as a place for people to just come and pray. Matthew and his family knew they were fortunate, and knew that others needed their help. They went to church and got to work!

MERCY

It had been about 1 month since her parents' divorce. Her family was in ruin. Sarah and her older sister were struggling in every way. Sarah was quieter, more reserved, pulling away from her friends at school and church. She dropped out of volleyball and stopped attending her youth group. Her youth minister and pastor never really reached out to check in or offer prayer. She spent weekends with her mother. Before the divorce, they would go to Mass regularly. Since the divorce, they only went on rare occasions. Her mother often felt judged by other parishioners and her pastor. Divorce is considered a mortal sin in the Church, and her mother felt guilt and shame whenever Father preached about the sanctity of marriage or the "scourge of divorce." But hardest of all, until the annulment went through, her mom was excluded from receiving Holy Communion. Father had made this obligation very clear to her. One day in Religion class the teacher was discussing the sacrament of marriage. Sarah couldn't take it anymore. She burst into tears and asked to be excused. *How could a loving God let this happen to her family?* No one from her Catholic school or parish seemed to care or have answers. She felt so alone.

FOR DISCUSSION: CHARITY AND MERCY

1. What is your parish doing right now to reach out and serve the poor and people in need in your community? How can young people be more involved in these efforts?
2. How does your parish take care of its own members when they are sick, dying, alone, or in need? How could young people be more involved in these efforts?
3. What specific issues or needs do teens have that are not being tended to or spoken about at your parish?
4. Does your parish do a good job reaching out to teens who are not very involved or connected to the parish? Would a new person, or someone who has not been to Mass in a long time find your parish a welcoming place? Say more about that.

MY THOUGHTS
