

HIRING PROCESS AND RESOURCES

Archdiocese of Detroit Youth Ministry Handbook

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THE PARISH COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

A. The Role of the Parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry

The Parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry (CYM) is an Ecclesial Minister who specializes in the religious formation of adolescents. Generally the age group the CYM is responsible for is middle adolescents (high school) but may also include younger adolescents (middle school/junior high). The role of the CYM is to coordinate the implementation of the vision of youth ministry in a parish setting. This vision should be based upon the *Renewing the Vision* document.

A full-time ecclesial minister, responsible for youth ministry, is highly encouraged whether a full time CYM or a full-time person who coordinates youth ministry along with other ministerial responsibilities. “Each parish, or group of parishes, employs a certified youth minister to offer a holistic youth ministry program for adolescents.” (*One in Faith and Knowledge*.)

A trained Coordinator of Youth Ministry brings leadership and coordination to the parish’s ministry to youth. He or she brings coherence and stability to this ministry and both calls and enables others to participate in it. This requires both a visionary dimension and a practical dimension. The less time allocated to the CYM position the more difficult it is to facilitate an effective youth ministry program. Support staff should also be provided for the CYM so that their efforts can be focused on that for which they were hired and trained. This may be a person who provides support for one or more pastoral staff.

The parish CYM must be able to help the parish community understand and define its mission in relation to youth. To do this the CYM must understand how to proclaim Jesus and His message in a way adapted to adolescent developmental concerns and youth culture. The CYM must then be able to help the parish youth ministry team translate this mission statement into long-range and short-range goals.

At the practical level, the CYM is constantly in the process of recruiting and training the parish youth ministry team, advocating for youth needs, and seeing that the parish youth ministry goals are being addressed. He or she must also be a good communicator, involving parish members in planning and informing the parish community about individual programs and how they relate to the parish’s mission.

The parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry is also a member of the parish’s pastoral staff or team, supervised directly by the pastor/pastoral coordinator. The CYM needs to work closely with other team members to insure that youth ministry is integrated with the other parish ministries and programs. This is especially important with the parish DRE and parish religious education program.

B. Qualifications of a Parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Whether part-time or full-time, salaried or paid hourly, the Parish CYM must have a command of a growing body of knowledge and skills in order to be effective. There is a growing consensus on the content of this knowledge and the nature of these skills. The brief summaries, which are listed below, are taken from those suggested by the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry's Committee on Accreditation and Certification.

If a CYM does not already have training when hired or appointed, his/her employment or appointment should be provisional, giving one year to receive training.

Necessary Knowledge for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Each parish CYM needs to have the necessary knowledge and skills listed here to be effective.

1. Being educated in Theology & Spirituality: Scripture, Christology, ecclesiology, Catholic doctrine, sacraments, justice and peace, evangelization, moral theology, spirituality and prayer, moral and faith development, religious education and church ministry.
2. Knowing the vision, history, goals, and principles of Catholic Youth Ministry.
3. Understanding of the various stages of adolescent development: physiological, intellectual, emotional, sexual, moral and spiritual/faith.
4. Understanding of the impact of youth culture.
5. Understanding of the processes of volunteer management and leadership development of youth and adults.

Necessary Skills for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry

1. Ability to plan and implement activities and learning/sharing experiences for the following components:
 - a. Advocacy
 - b. Catechesis
 - c. Community Life
 - d. Evangelization
 - e. Justice and Service
 - f. Pastoral Care
 - g. Prayer and Worship
2. Ability to design, implement, coordinate and evaluate a Total Youth Ministry Program incorporating the above named components.

3. Ability to recruit, train, supervise and support volunteer youth ministers.
4. Ability to develop and implement policies for youth ministry.
5. Ability to develop and implement a youth ministry budget.

C. Selecting a Parish CYM

The guidelines that follow will help the pastor and the parish locate the right person for this crucial task. The process and the awareness it creates is as important as the eventual outcome. These guidelines will also help the new CYM to function well in his/her position, participating as an active member of the parish's pastoral team.

Step 1. Pastor Appoints a Search Committee

The Search Committee will have the overall responsibility for overseeing the entire selection process. This is not limited simply to interviewing and selection but also includes determining time lines, parish needs, and the position job description.

The composition of this committee should include representatives of the major groups likely to be involved in the parish's youth ministry effort. Therefore, it should include the pastor, DRE or another staff member, parents, an Education Commission member, youth, adults, a youth ministry team member, and possibly a CYM from a neighboring parish.

Step 2. Determine Parish Needs

The Search Committee then identifies the current youth ministry needs of the parish. Many methods are available for doing this. The Committee may do a broad survey of the youth and families of the parish. Or it may do a more focused survey polling only the Committee members. A sample survey instrument is included in the section Resource for Assessing and Developing Youth Ministry in this handbook.

Step 3. Formulate Job Description

A clear and accurate understanding of the CYM's responsibilities is necessary to determine the type of person who will best meet the needs of the parish. The job description should include qualifications needed, major responsibilities, and the parish structures for supervision and evaluation. See appendix A.

When formulating the job description, the committee should keep in mind the major components of youth ministry in Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry: catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice & service, leadership

development, pastoral care, prayer and worship, and advocacy. The parish needs, as determined in the previous step, should also be reflected in the job description. If a job description exists from a previous CYM, the committee may simply need to review and make minor updates to it.

A basic decision to consider before formulating the job description is whether this will be a full-time or part-time position. A part-time position may be salaried or paid hourly. A part-time position necessarily limits the responsibilities of the CYM.

Another decision will need to be made regarding the extent of the position responsibilities. Will the position description include ministry to young adults (18-35) or junior high students? What responsibility will the CYM have for adolescent catechesis, for Confirmation preparation? For family ministry and/or adult catechesis? Some of these areas may be indicated by parish needs but the services to high school students will need to be limited accordingly to insure a reasonable and attainable job description. Increasing areas of responsibility would require a full time position even in smaller parishes. A process for writing a CYM job description is included in this section. Be sure to include in the job description any expectations for regular office hours or minimum hours spent in job-related activities.

Step 4. Advertise the Position Openings

At this point in the process the committee should notify the Office for Youth Ministry that they will be looking for a parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry if this hasn't been done previously. The Office for Youth Ministry has on file a list of potential candidates. In addition, the parish will need to do further recruitment for potential candidates. Diocesan newspapers, Catholic college placement bureaus, and college parishes or Newman centers should be considered.

Step 5. Review and Prioritize Applications

After the application deadline has passed, the committee should assemble to review the applications that have been received. Applications should be reviewed with the job description and parish needs in mind. Four to six candidates should be selected for interviews.

The Committee should decide on interview dates and the candidates selected for interviews should be contacted by phone to confirm their continued interest and to set up interviews. This should be followed up with a confirmation letter. If the parish decides to interview candidates from out of the area, it should provide food and lodging during the individual's stay and pay for transportation expenses (this may be negotiable with the individual).

Individuals not selected for interviews should be sent a polite "thank you for your interest" letter within a week after the final determination of who will be interviewed.

Step 6. Interview the Candidates

The committee should decide in advance some key questions they will ask of each applicant. The questions should reflect the goals and needs of the parish community. The committees should also be careful to allow time for the candidates to ask questions and seek clarification (see appendix B and C).

Directly after each interview, the committee should review and summarize its reaction to the candidate. A recorder should summarize the discussion in writing for later review.

Step 8. Final Selection and Contract Determination

With the completion of all the interviews the Search Committee will need to meet again to make a final recommendation to the pastor. When it has reached its final decision, the Committee should make its recommendation of its three top candidates to the pastor in writing. The personal references and previous employers of these candidates should be contacted by phone.

The pastor then makes his decision and then contacts the prospective CYM to offer him or her the position. If he or she accepts, the pastor should meet with the new CYM at the to discuss salary and benefits and once a criminal background check has been done a contract can be signed (see appendix D.) Accountability and evaluation structures should also be discussed and agreed upon.

D. Supervision & Evaluation

Accountability refers to the responsible relationship between the CYM and pastor, and ultimately the faith community. The two kinds of accountability referred to in this section are supervision and evaluation. Supervision is the on-going process of facilitating and empowering professional growth. Evaluation is the process by which the supervisor and CYM dialogue about job performance and strengths and weaknesses in the ministry of the CYM.

The pastor is responsible for evaluation. However, the pastor may delegate the supervision responsibility to another member of the pastoral team. If this is the case, the pastor should be in contact with the delegated supervisor about the goals and progress made in the CYM's ministry skills. The following are some suggestions for increasing accountability and support for the CYM.

ORIENTATION

The pastor or his designee from the parish staff will need to orient the newly hired or appointed CYM to the parish operation. This includes introduction to key people, office procedures, available resources, budget matters, etc.

When appropriate, the newly hired CYM should be introduced to the parish community at a Sunday liturgy.

All newly hired lay CYM's, who are new to youth ministry and/or the Archdiocese of Detroit, are also expected to contact the Office for Youth Ministry in order to be orientated to all diocesan services and to begin the formation process to which all ecclesial ministers are called.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is a key component for the growth and support of any minister. For an individual just beginning in ministry, formal supervision should occur frequently, perhaps monthly. For experienced ministers, less formal and frequent supervision is needed. Some of the goals of supervision include:

- a. To learn from experience by sharing events and the feelings which accompany them.
- b. To develop the professional skills necessary for a youth minister in today's world.
- c. To develop competence in setting, achieving, and evaluating specific personal learning and ministerial goals.
- d. To integrate personal spirituality, theological understanding, and ministry experience.

IDEAS FOR A JOB DESCRIPTION

It is understood that no one could perform all the functions listed below. This compilation is intended to be used as an aid in writing a more specific description of what is expected of the youth minister in the local parish. Please use this more as a “menu” rather than an actual job description.

- I. POSITION TITLE:** Coordinator of Youth Ministry

- II. PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THIS POSITION:** The Coordinator of Youth Ministry responds to the spiritual and social needs of the Catholic youth in the parish. The Coordinator of Youth Ministry serves students in grades 7-12 through direct contact and through training parish volunteers for work with youth. The Coordinator of Youth Ministry develops and coordinates youth activities in the parish.

- III. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:**
 - 1. The Coordinator of Youth Ministry is accountable to the pastor.
 - 2. The Coordinator collaborates with the parish committees and organizations that share responsibility for youth.
 - 3. The Coordinator maintains contact with the Archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry, gains and maintains familiarity with Archdiocesan guidelines and attends Archdiocesan and Vicariate meetings.
 - 4. The Coordinator attends parish events, including liturgies.

- IV. WORKING CONDITIONS:**
 - 1. The youth minister needs to be:
 - a. An active Catholic in good standing with the Church.
 - b. An active and visible member of a parish community.
 - c. A person of deep faith and prayer.
 - d. A person called to ministry.
 - 2. Maintains a flexible work schedule averaging 35-40 hours per week, including evenings, weekends and special occasions.
 - 3. Provides own transportation and is reimbursed for out-of-town travel according to Archdiocesan norms.
 - 4. Has adequate workspace and secretarial assistance.
 - 5. Has a separate phone line with a published youth ministry number attached to an answering machine.
 - 6. Salaries and benefits are arranged according to Archdiocesan guidelines.

- V. MAJOR POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES:**
 - 1. Evangelization and Community Relations:
 - a. Spends sufficient time with the youth to develop rapport.
 - b. Spends sufficient time at public and Catholic schools meeting with administrators and counselors to become acquainted with the school setting of the youth.

- c. Attends extracurricular activities at the various schools to develop rapport with the students.
 - d. Spends time familiarizing him/herself with parish files, histories, present needs and likely attitudes of adult parishioners.
 - e. Formulates and presents to the parish community a total vision of youth ministry at appropriate times and places.
2. Retreat Ministry:
- a. Fosters growth in prayer for the youth of the parish by creating opportunities for prayer groups, prayer experiences, and liturgies.
 - b. Develops a variety of retreats on a yearly basis as part of an effort to meet the spiritual needs of youth (e.g., ranging in length from two hours to several days, from retreats dedicated to fun-filled community building to those of more spiritual depth).
 - c. Supports and participates in Archdiocesan-sponsored retreats, conventions, and other appropriate meetings.
3. Service:
- a. Identifies areas for service in the parish, the wider community, and the world--especially areas of social concern and community worship.
4. Catechesis:
- a. Consults with parish religious education personnel to support the religious education program.
 - b. Works collaboratively with Director of Religious Education (DRE) on the formation and implementation of the Confirmation program and other faith formation programs.
5. Leadership Development
- a. Recruits, trains, supports and supervises adult youth ministry volunteers.
 - b. Develops a Parish Youth Council for the purpose of assessing needs and for planning.
 - c. Provides leadership training for Youth Council.
6. Administration
- a. Meets monthly with the Parish Youth Ministry Council to collaborate in long-range planning for and evaluation of youth ministry.
 - b. Provides up-to-date progress reports to the Council.
 - c. Designs and maintains filing and record keeping systems for all youth ministry programs.
 - d. Becomes acquainted with and follows office procedures in the parish.
 - e. Participates in staff meetings.
 - f. Responsible for budget (planning and accountability)

VI. KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES:

1. Theological/Scriptural/Social/Cultural
 - a. Understanding of the scriptural and theological foundations of evangelization, including concepts such as revelation, discipleship and conversion
 - b. Understanding of the methods of evangelization such as outreach, relationship building, symbols, witness and storytelling.
 - c. Ability to utilize relational skills and techniques to create community with youth.
 - d. Ability to assess and utilize the family, social, cultural and global trends and concerns in developing a ministry with youth.
 - e. Ability to utilize effective communication skills in all aspects of ministry.

2. Developmental
 - a. Understanding of the theological and psychological foundations of youth retreats, principles, models, methods, and skills for designing retreats developmentally appropriate to age levels.
 - b. Ability to utilize proper liturgical process to design, implement and coordinate youth liturgies, prayer services and worship experiences.
 - c. Ability to design, implement and coordinate a variety of youth retreat programs.
 - d. Understanding of the impact of adolescent psychological development and social growth upon the development of justice and peace education and action programming for youth.
 - e. Ability to infuse justice and peace into all aspects of youth ministry particularly in goals and programming.

3. Catechesis
 - a. Understanding of current catechetical theories and methods.
 - b. Understanding of the RCIA as it applies to youth ministry.
 - c. Ability to minister effectively within parish systems and within the larger church community.
 - d. Ability to design and coordinate an adolescent catechesis program or curriculum as an integral component of a total ministry with youth utilizing the foundations, aims, processes, and principles of adolescent catechesis, as developed in The Challenge-of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith.¹

4. Leadership Development
 - a. Understanding of the different techniques of leadership development, such as consensus, decision making, conflict resolution, and group dynamics and practices used in group facilitation.
 - b. Ability to identify appropriate leadership qualities for a particular role and to call forth those individuals with the gifts necessary for the role.
 - c. Understanding of strategic planning.
 - d. Ability to enable others to work collaboratively.
 - e. Ability to implement diverse learning practices in appropriate learning situations, such as parent meetings, volunteer training, workshops and leadership training.

The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith, National Federation for Youth Ministry. Washington. D.C.

5. Administration

- a. Understanding of the methods needed to work collaboratively with persons and agencies within a parish structure.
- b. Understanding of effective communication skills.
- c. Ability to apply appropriate managerial principles and administrative skills to the coordination of a parish program.
- d. Ability to utilize available technology.
- e. Understanding of the methods needed to work collaboratively with persons and agencies within a parish structure.
- f. Understanding of financial management.

VII. POSITION SPECIFICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS:

Education - Training and/or Experience

- a. Minimum of three years experience working with teenagers.
- b. Degree in Youth Ministry, Theology, Pastoral Studies or other relevant areas, or its equivalency.
- c. Commitment to continuing professional education.

Interviewing the CYM Candidate

Points to Remember

- a. Review background data on the candidate and contact references prior to the interview.
- b. Determine interview questions (see suggestions below) and design a grid in order to compare responses.
- c. Ask open-ended questions which require more than a simple yes or no response.
- d. Phrase questions in such a way that they do not suggest the desired answer.
- e. Use flashback questions to explore an area not completely explored.
- f. Allow the candidate moments of silence to collect thoughts and verbalize his/her responses.
- g. Respect the individuality of the applicant and try to preserve his/her self-confidence.
- h. Give a complete job description to the applicant as well as the interviewers, as part of the interview.
- i. Provide the opportunity for the candidate to ask questions.
- j. Tell the applicant the date he/she can expect a decision and ask for a date when he/she is available for employment.
- k. Write down your reaction as soon as possible after the interview.
- l. By law it is illegal to ask questions regarding race, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, disabilities (unless related to job responsibilities), religion (although in the case of a CYM where knowledge of Catholic belief is necessary, one may), or marital status of prospective employees.
- m. After the interview take a few moments to evaluate yourselves and how well the interview was conducted. Were you prepared? Did you put the candidate at ease? Did you ask open-ended questions? Did you concentrate on listening to the candidate's responses? Did you avoid any questions of a discriminatory nature?

Examples of Behavioral-Based Questions

Example 1

Questions for use in a parish with a diverse cultural makeup, in which the new CYM will have to develop programming that meets the various needs of the community:

- Please share with us a time in your ministry experience where you ministered in a multicultural setting. What was the biggest challenge in that situation? How did you respond to it? What did you learn?
- What are three things you would see as important to do in your first year to respond to the culturally diverse reality of this parish?

Example 2

Questions to be used in a parish especially interested in the leadership style of the candidate and the impact it has on the parish's ministry:

- How would the young people and adults who have worked with you in the past describe your leadership style?
- Please name one example that summarizes this leadership style and your effectiveness as a leader.

Example 3

Questions to be used in a parish particularly interested in the CYM's ability to make decisions in critical situations or situations where differing opinions exist:

- Tell us about a situation in which you made a decision that made you unpopular with parents or with youth. How did you handle it? Was the conflict resolved? How?
- Our parish has a rule that young people under age 18 cannot drive their own cars to youth events; yet an event is about to take place and you are short of adult drivers. What do you do?
- How would you handle the situation of catching a young person smoking at a parish youth retreat – a youth who insists that his or her parents have given him or her permission to do so?

Example 4

Question for use in a parish whose staff members have a reputation for being very assertive. The interview team wants to assess candidates' ability to assert themselves and hold their own in that group:

- Tell us about a job experience in which you felt compelled to speak up so that other people knew what you were thinking or how you felt. Was that difficult or easy? Did you get the results you were seeking?

Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry has developed the following code of ethics for youth ministry leaders¹. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry recommends that youth ministry leaders adopt this code by signing, dating, and placing it in their personnel file. This code of ethics is intended for youth ministry leaders regardless of employment status within the church. While this code may be used in conjunction with existing diocesan policies, protocols or codes, it is not intended to supersede them.

Professional Ethical Obligations

1. Ministerial Role

- a) Youth ministry leaders work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
- b) Youth ministry leaders faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- c) Youth ministry leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
- d) Youth ministry leaders respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their personal form of spirituality normative.

2. Inclusion

- a) Youth ministry leaders recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- b) Youth ministry leaders serve all people without regard to race, color, gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- c) Youth ministry leaders ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.

3. Accountability

- a) Youth ministry leaders are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the (arch)diocesan (arch)bishop.
- b) Youth ministry leaders are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministerial functions "...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
- c) Youth ministry leaders exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.

¹This code of ethics pertains to lay ecclesial ministers serving as youth ministry leaders. These individuals may conduct ministry under a variety of titles, including but not limited to coordinator of youth ministry, director of youth ministry, parish youth minister, and/or campus minister. Some pastoral associates, parish coordinators and catechetical leaders may also share responsibility for youth ministry and as such may be considered "lay ecclesial ministers serving as youth ministry leaders."

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4. Confidentiality

- a) Youth ministry leaders respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
- b) Youth Ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- c) Youth ministry leaders support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.

5. Conduct

- a) Youth ministry leaders are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
- b) Youth ministry leaders maintain appropriate professional boundaries (e.g. physical, sexual, relational, and emotional). Romantic, dating, or sexual relationships between a youth ministry leader and an adolescent are inappropriate and unethical.
- c) Youth ministry leaders model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
- d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with, adolescents is inappropriate and unethical.

6. Referrals and Intervention

- a) Youth ministry leaders are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- b) Youth ministry leaders are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- c) Youth ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.

7. Parish/Diocesan Policies

- a) Youth ministry leaders are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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- NALM, NCCL, and NFCYM, (September 29,2002). *Common Competency Project Core Certification Standards and Competencies*. Draft 3. Copyright © 2003 by the NFCYM. 415 Michigan Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20017. All rights reserved. The NFCYM grants permission to Catholic dioceses and parishes to reproduce and distribute this document for educational purposes.
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