



# OFFICE of ADOLESCENT CATECHESIS and EVANGELIZATION

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

## CHARTING OUR FUTURE 2019

*I encourage communities to examine, respectfully and seriously, the situation of their young people, in order to find the most fitting ways of providing them with pastoral care.*

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*

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# VISION

Catholic adolescents in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston are formed as lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ.

# MISSION

Providing leadership, formation and resources in Comprehensive Youth Ministry for parishes to effectively form adolescents into lifelong disciples in the Catholic tradition.

# PREFACE

In the spring of 2019 the Office of Adolescent Catechesis & Evangelization engaged the broad youth ministry community in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in a planning process that included:

- A. Examining research on I-Gen (Gen-Z), Disaffiliation, and various articles and books that have examined youth ministry over the past decade or so.
- B. Identifying both successes and areas for growth in the OACE and parish youth ministry
- C. Identifying priorities for the OACE

This document is designed to achieve two goals:

1. Provide the youth ministry community with a summary of the data/research/documents utilized, as well as the raw data from the Listening Sessions so that you might consider these findings as you continue to develop your own ministry to, with, by, and for the young church.
2. Inform the youth ministry community of Galveston-Houston how the OACE will respond to the feedback and recommendations provided to us so that we can better serve your needs.

As you review this document I would encourage you to consider how it might be a springboard for your own local assessment with your parish community. We would be happy to assist you in your own listening and planning process. See page 31 for some ways we can help.

## RESEARCH REVIEW

**The youth ministry community was provided a variety of documents/articles/research to explore prior to the Listening Sessions. What follows is a brief summary of each of those.**

### Going, Going, Gone

McCarty, Robert J. and John . Vitek. Going, Going, Gone: The Dynamics of Disaffiliation Among Young Catholics, St. Mary's Press, Winona, MN in collaboration with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), September 2017

Three Categories of Disaffiliated: 24% are currently disaffiliated and disaffiliation continues to rise

1. The Injured: Negative experiences connected with faith and religious practice
2. The Drifters: Religious belief and practice slowly fades
3. The Dissenters: Active resistance to, or rejection of, the Church – often in relation to “hot-button” social issues

14% report being either Atheist or Agnostic

### Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry

Martinson, Roland, Wes Black, and John Roberto. Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry: Leading Congregations Toward Exemplary Youth Ministry, EYM Publishing, St. Paul, MN, 2010

Youth of maturing faith need a supportive coalition of four key factors:

- Family that practices and talks about their faith
- Faith community that values young people and their faith journey
- Adult role models (Pastor, YM Leaders)
- Youth Ministry focused on quality relationships (mentors) and Jesus Christ

## Youth Ministry 3.0

Oestreicher, Mark. Youth Ministry 3.0: A Manifesto of Where We've Been, Where We Are, And Where We Need to Go, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008

Youth Ministry 3.0 proposes that youth ministry should be focused on three key areas: Affinity, Communion, and Mission

Affinity – A natural starting point for ministering to young people is through their existing relationships (affinity groups)

Communion – Community is life-on-life, whole life, eating together, sharing journeys, working through difficulties, wrestling with the gospel, accountability, safety, openness, serving...

Missional ministry seeks to discern, observe, and identify what's close to the heart of God and where God is already at work – *and then joins up with the work of God already in progress.*

## Missional Communities

<http://www.vergenetwork.org>

Missional communities focus is on enabling every person to be a missionary & minister (or leader) in serving other people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Missional communities will only be as missional as their discipleship.

Young people discern their own response to the Gospel rather than pre-planned service projects.

## Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

Smith, Christian, and Patricia Snell. Soul Searching: The Spiritual and Religious Lives of Teenagers, Oxford University Press, 2009

The *National Study on Youth and Religion* (2008) identified the following as the common belief system amongst millennials.

1. There is a God who watches over human life from a distance.
2. God wants people to be good, nice and fair.
3. Central goal in life is to be happy and feel good about oneself.
4. God is not involved in one's life except when needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to Heaven when they die.

## Almost Christian

Dean, Kenda Creasy. Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church, Oxford University Press, 2010

**p. 11:** “Youth ministers today are better educated, better resourced, better paid, and “longer lasting” in their positions than ever before. Some young people we encounter in ministry come away with life-changing faith, but many (perhaps most) do not. Why? The answer may simply be that most youth ministry is not accomplished by youth ministers....We have known for some time that youth groups do important things for teenagers, providing moral formation, learned competencies, and social and organizational ties. But they seem less effective as catalysts for consequential faith, which is far more likely to take root in the rich relational soil of families, congregations, and mentor relationships where young people can see what faithful lives look like, and encounter the people who love them enacting a larger story of divine care and hope.”

**p. 12:** “What if the blasé religiosity of most American teenagers is not the result of poor communication but the result of excellent communication of a watered-down gospel so devoid of God’s self-giving love in Jesus Christ, so immune to the sending love of the Holy Spirit that it might not be Christianity at all? What if the *church* models a way of life that asks, not passionate surrender but ho-hum assent? What if we are preaching moral affirmation, a feel-better faith, and a hands-off God instead of the decisively involved, impossibly loving, radically sending God of Abraham and Mary, who desired us enough to enter creation in Jesus Christ and whose Spirit is active in the church and in the world today? If this is the case – if theological malpractice explains teenagers’ half-hearted religious identities – then perhaps most young people practice Moralistic Therapeutic Deism not because they reject Christianity, but because this is the only “Christianity” they know”

**p. 24:** ...if American young people find the church worthy of “benign whatever-ism” and no more – then maybe the issue is simply that the emperor has no clothes, and young people are telling churches that we are not who we say we are. If we fail to bear God’s life-altering, world-changing, fear-shattering good news (which, after all, is the reason the church exists in the first place) – if desire for God and devotion to our fellow human beings is replaced by a loveless shell of religiosity – then young people unable to find consequential Christianity in the Church absolutely *should* default to something safer. In fact, that is exactly what they are doing.”

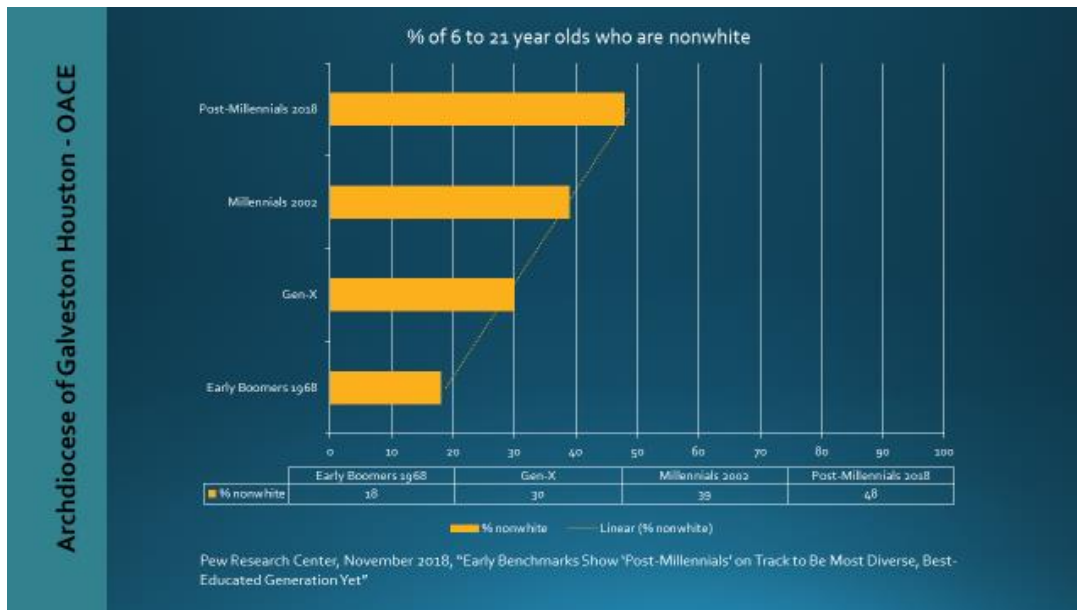
## I-GEN (Gen-Z)

Twenge, Jean M. *I-Gen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, Atria Books, 2017

Some of the key findings of Dr. Twenge are as follows:

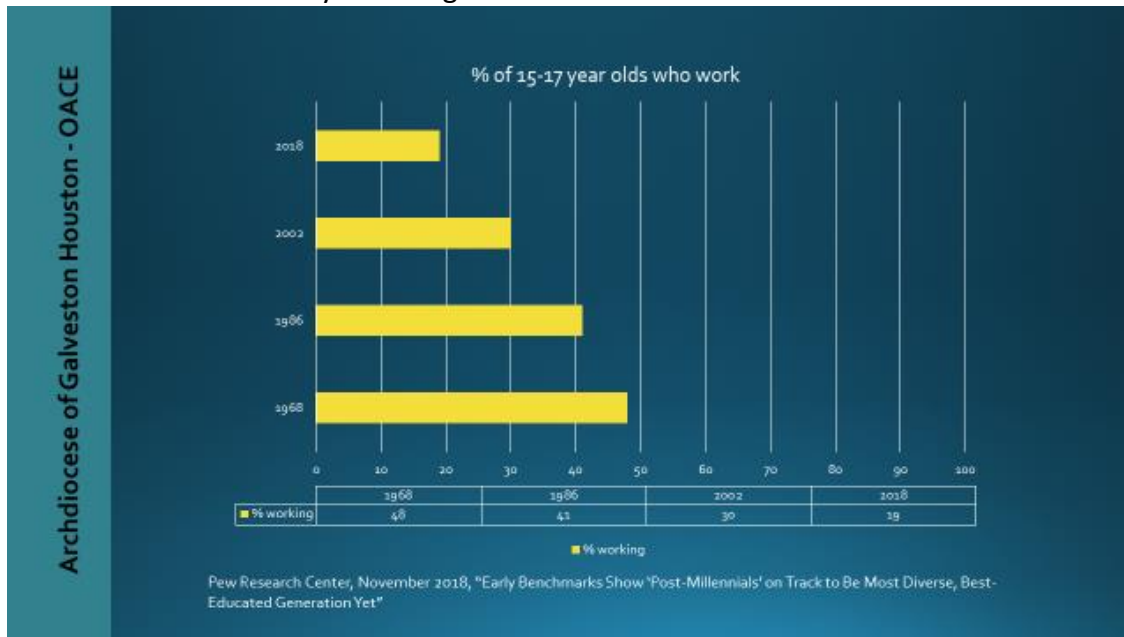
- Put down the phone: I-Gen (or Gen Z) are constantly attached to their phones from morning to night.
- Porn
- In-Person Deficit – In the age of constant connection by electronic devices, young people spend less time together in person thereby creating young people who are less happy, lonelier, and more depressed
- Anxiety and Depression has skyrocketed amongst I-Gen
- Growing up slowly – They lag behind previous generations in getting jobs, getting their driver's license, and amount of dating. They are having less sex, drink less alcohol, do less drugs (but vaping is on the rise)
- Less narcissism and entitlement than millennials
- More pessimistic and less confident about their future
- Willing to work hard in school

## PEW RESEARCH CENTER

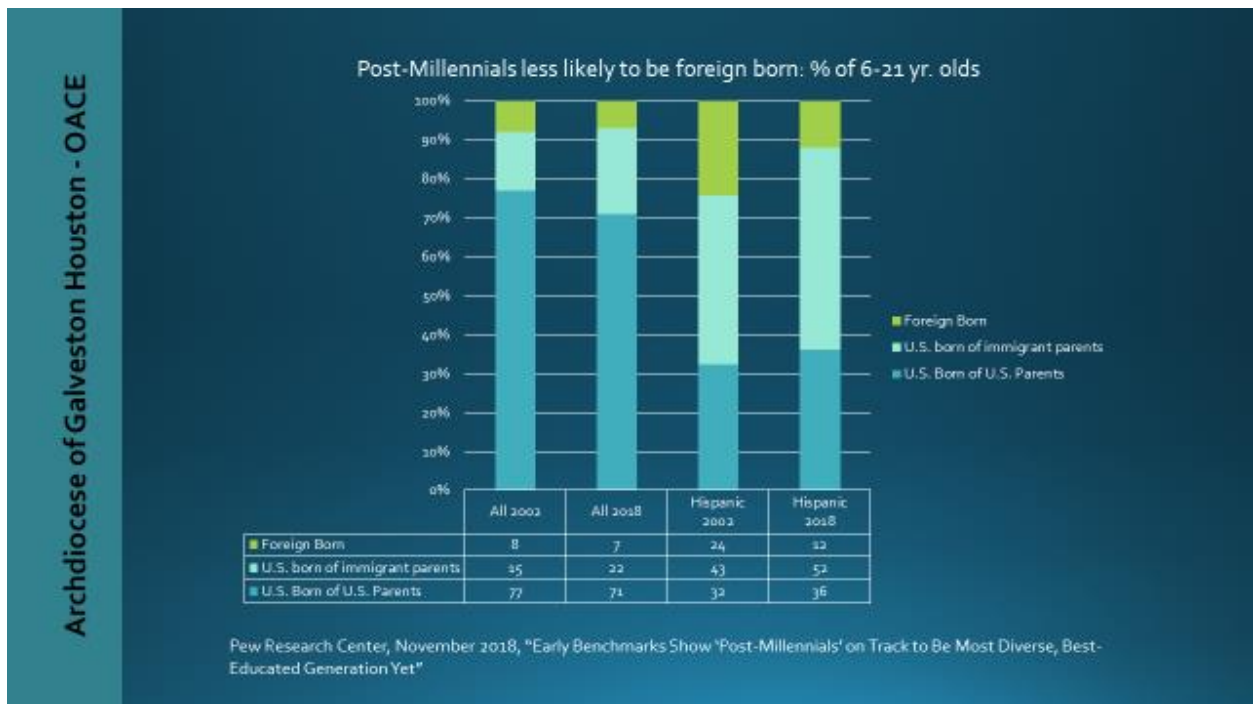


There are now less first generation Hispanics and more second and third generation Hispanics

Gen-Z is the most racially diverse generation of Americans ever.



I-Gen has the lowest % of 15-17 year olds who work compared to previous generations





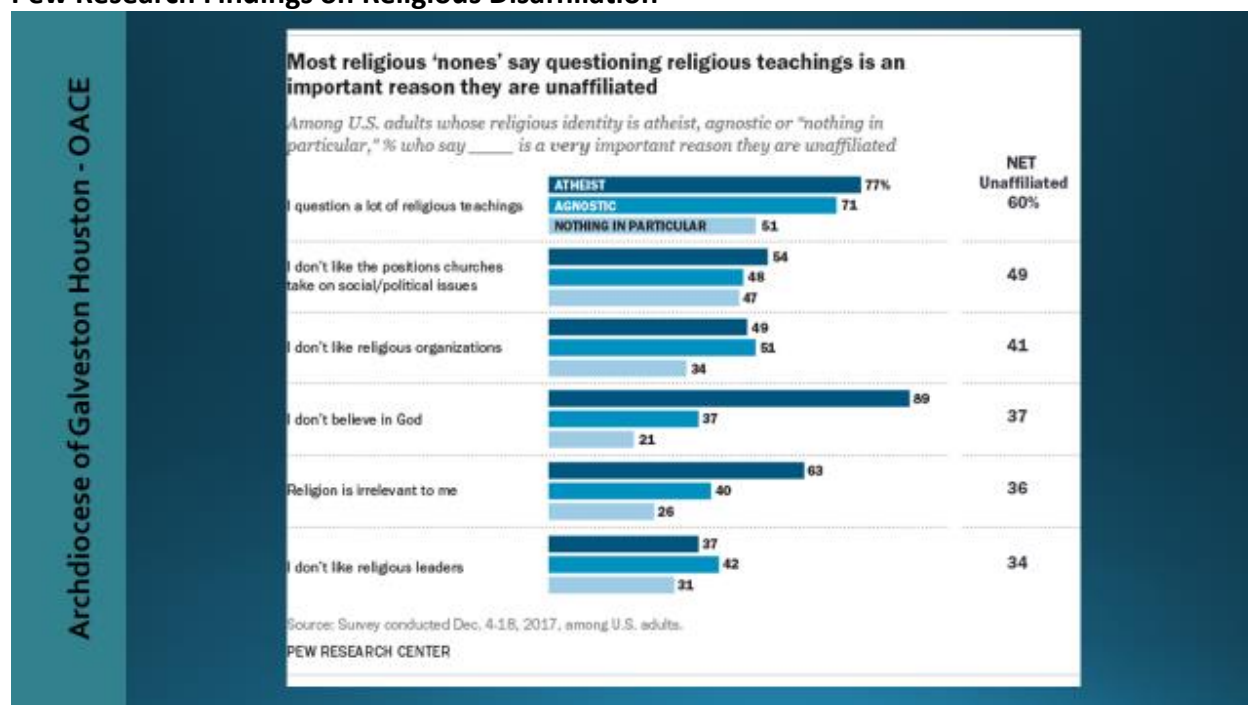
## RELIGION

Data gleaned from a Cultivation Ministries presentation in November 2018.

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- Gen Z teens (13-18) are twice as likely as adults to say they are atheists. (13% vs. 6%)
- 59% identify as Christian (verses 68% of the adult population).
- More will grow up as Nones than any other Generation
- By default, more post-millennials will grow up in an unaffiliated household than any other generation.
- Growing Population of secular nonbelievers who don't participate in religion at all: they never attend religious services, don't pray, and don't believe in God.
  - 1 out of 6 8th graders,
  - 1 out of 5 10th graders,
  - 1 out of 4 12th graders, and
  - 1 out of 3 college students and young adults.

### Pew Research Findings on Religious Disaffiliation



## CHRISTUS VIVIT

*Each young person's heart should thus be considered "holy ground", a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must "take off our shoes" in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery.*

In 2018 Pope Francis held the *Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*. In 2019 Pope Francis published his reflections on, and learnings from, the synod in his *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit of the Holy Father Francis to Young People and to the Entire People of God*. Chapter 7 of the Exhortation focuses specifically on youth ministry. In this section the Holy Father highlights the following:

- a. "Although it is never easy to approach young people, two things have become increasingly evident: the realization that the entire community has to be involved in evangelizing them, and the urgent requirement that they take on a greater role in pastoral outreach." (CV 202)
- b. "Youth Ministry has to be synodal; it has to involve a 'journeying together' ... (CV 206)
- c. "Young people themselves are agents of youth ministry." (CV 203)
- d. Motivate young people to provide outreach to their peers (CV 210); "young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at." (CV211)
- e. "As for *growth*, I would make one important point. In some places, it happens that young people are helped to have a powerful experience of God, an encounter with Jesus that touched their hearts. But the only follow-up to this is a series of "formation" meetings featuring talks about doctrinal and moral issues, the evils of today's world, the Church, her social doctrine, chastity, marriage, birth control and so on. As a result, many young people get bored, they lose the fire of their encounter with Christ and the joy of following him; many give up and others become downcast or negative. Rather than being too concerned with communicating a great deal of doctrine, let us first try to awaken and consolidate the great experiences that sustain the Christian life." (CV 212)
- f. 4 areas that the Holy Father suggests need further development are prayer, service, the arts as a means of encountering God, infusing faith into sports, and engagement with nature and the environment, particularly through Catholic Scouting. (CV 224-229)

- g. Popular Youth Ministry: “In addition to the ordinary, well-planned pastoral ministry that parishes and movements carry out, it is also important to allow room for a “popular” youth ministry, with a different style, schedule, pace and method. Broader and more flexible, it goes out to those places where real young people are active, and fosters the natural leadership qualities and the charisms sown by the Holy Spirit. It tries to avoid imposing obstacles, rules, controls and obligatory structures on these young believers who are natural leaders in their neighborhoods and in other settings. We need only to accompany and encourage them, trusting a little more in the genius of the Holy Spirit, who acts as he wills.” (CV 230) “Youth ministry, when it ceases to be elitist and is willing to be “popular”, is a process that is gradual, respectful, patient, hopeful, tireless and compassionate. The Synod proposed the example of the disciples of Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24:13-35) as a model of what happens in youth ministry.” (CV 236)
- h. Accompaniment: Young people need to be accompanied by adults, the family is the first place of accompaniment. (CV 242) The faith community, too, has a role in accompaniment. (CV 243) The qualities young people look for in a mentor are “being a faithful Christian who engages with the Church and the world; someone who constantly seeks holiness; someone who is a confidant without judging. Similarly, someone who actively listens to the needs of young people and responds in kind; someone deeply loving and self-aware; someone who recognizes his or her limits and knows the joys and sorrows of the spiritual journey. An especially important quality in mentors is the acknowledgement of their own humanity – the fact that they are human beings who make mistakes: not perfect people but forgiven sinners.” (CV 246)

Each of us can benefit by prayerfully reading the entire Apostolic Exhortation and reflecting on its implications for our ministry to, with, by, and for young people.

# LISTENING SESSION RESPONSES

What are the top challenges facing youth/youth ministry today?

In other words, in order to assure that adolescents are on track to be lifelong disciples what do we need to be paying attention to?

## **Parents/Family/Relationships**

- Families of most teens in formation do not attend Mass
- Teens start in rebellion against the Church as part of their parents' hypocritical system
- Parent Involvement (2)
- Family participation at Mass
- Families prioritizing non-church events
- Realize how the stresses of family and friend issues affect them
- The Family
- Parental education (as to why they need to do)
- Lack of parental involvement/ example
- Communication with parents and parent involvement
- Indifference or hostility to faith from friends, family, culture that leads to relativism or lack of faith for themselves
- Parental support
- Helicopter parenting
- Fatherlessness
- Parents' evangelization
- Parents need to belong to a parish group, so they can be aware that the church is there for them.
- Change minimalist mindset with parents
- Getting to the parents
- How much parents want to/can put forth (resistance)
- Family unit
- Evangelize parents, then catechize them
- Family issues
- Ministering to parents
- Family
- Breakdown of family/need to minister to family
- Speakers and resources for parents and family

## **Social Media/Technology/Internet**

- Media and its effects on our young people
- Internet/ social media/ unfettered access to anything unsafe
- A willingness to address topics that are in the news
- Using social media as a means to evangelize
- Social media

- Attachment disorders due to technology and bad parenting and the psychological effect of those factors
- Pressure from social media
- Cyber addiction
- Utilizing social media for ministry
- Technology/Social Media (Stronger social media presence from OAC; how do we use social media to evangelize?)
- Porn
- They are afraid of silence, need noise
- Lots of “friends” – but no real friends. Need real, intimate connections
- Teaching discernment, especially with technology (include youth and parent)

### **Youth Image/Health/Self Discovery**

- Subject matter
- Porn
- Figuring out who they are and what life means
- Stress, anxiety, depression from school, activities, pressure to succeed, etc
- Anxiety and depression
- Me too movement
- The pressure they feel coming from many directions
- Mental illness
- Hopelessness
- The church community have a counselor on staff
- Depression from poor nutrition, lack of sleep & anxiety
- Negative Self Image
- Poor Face-to-Face Social Skills / Community & Identity Disconnect
- Active rejection of youth
- Dating non-existent (traditional forms of encounter/asking out changed. Texting)
- Lack of understanding of human relationships
- They are compassionate but feel others don't understand them (Middle School)
- Inability to cope with anxiety
- Belonging
- Identity
- Depression/Anxiety (mental wellness; help teens to identify level of depression)
- Human sexuality (pastoral care of LGBTQ)
- Misunderstanding identity
- Acceptance (human dignity)

### **Younger/Older Adolescent Specific**

- A clear distinction of young adolescent (middle school) being different and having different needs from older adolescents (high school)
- Keeping youth engaged with activities

### **Moral Issues/Sex**

- Moral Issues... that they know the WHY
- Relativism (3)
- Pre-Mature Sexual Activity & Exposure
- Maleness and femaleness
- Helping young people develop a value system
- The truths of the faith vs. untruths of society
- Distorted view of what love is
- Sexuality catechesis
- Clear moral guidelines
- Truth

### **Formation**

- Apologetics... that they know the answers to common arguments... God, Jesus, Scripture, Abortion, Same Sex, etc.
- High school teens return to formation after having been away since 2nd Grade
- Meaningful post Confirmation programs
- More cost effective retreats
- Teaching them how to recognize God's voice
- High school teens feel forced into formation just to get confirmed
- Lack of understanding of how faith is compatible with science/all other academic subjects
- Giving them alternatives to stay faithful
- Making the lessons relevant and interesting for the youth
- Balancing "games" with inspiration
- Catholic identity in a secular / Protestant saturated world
- Developmental appropriateness
- How is faith relevant to their life now
- RE vs CYM

### **Discipleship/Devotion**

- That they have a deep prayer and sacramental life.
- Frequent Confession and Reverent Reception of Holy Communion
- Devotional life... Scapular, Rosary, Medals, Holy Cards
- We do not have enough time with high school teens to achieve both Belong and Believe.
- Moving their faith from their head to their heart
- We need to focus on the love and the joy of discipleship
- Submission to the Holy Spirit
- Mass attendance
- Leadership opportunities for youth
- Struggling to have a disciplined prayer life, a relationship with God, and being an evangelist through missionary discipleship when opportunities to share faith arise
- Hunger for spirituality, not religion
- Impact of culture on how faith is practiced
- Combat shallow (lukewarm) Christianity
- Spirituality challenges - (Difference in generations/traditions like the mantilla vs jeans with holes in them.) Outward expression should be accepted. All should be open to the breadth of spirituality before us / not just my spirituality.
- Relationship (vocations)
- The larger Church – connections and prayer experiences
- How to deepen relationship with Christ (going beyond surface)
- Lifelong journey of faith

### **Schedules**

- Schedules of our young people
- Time (they have to work)
- Scheduling (between school and church)
- More opportunities for teens from around the Archdiocese to unite
- Secular activities

### **Relational Ministry**

- The needs of the students and not just teaching what we want to but reaching out to the teens and listening to their needs and wants
- An opportunity to provide what teens need in each specific parish rather than an overarching top down plan
- Connecting with youth through adult mentors
- Lack of adult faith mentors and a community of faithful friends in their lives
- Youth ministry not being mentoring program because of time wasted trying to catechize teens that were never evangelized.
- Lack of adult support/interest/investment
- Church have a prayer request line
- Meeting them where they are
- Student discernment
- Sharing in community
- Meaningful interaction
- Stronger focus on evangelization
- Being welcoming
- Presence over preparation
- Developing community (person-person)
- Encourage face-to-face (put away phones)

### **Priests/Pastoral Support**

- Pastoral support from priests
- The Cardinal/Bishops talking but no one is listening, specifically at Confirmation masses
- Priest and religious who are available to youth when they don't have that in the parish
- Welcoming congregation



### **General Youth Ministry & Adult Formation**

- Leadership opportunities for adults serving youth
- Although I am sure this is better, but I think BCYM should have a one on one option for some of its classes or any class that busy volunteers cannot make
- How tied the hands of Catholic YMs are compares to non-Catholic YMs (child protection)
- Salaries that attract and keep solid YMs in the ministry
- Being all on the same page
- YM options for various size parishes
- Clear vision (from diocese to parish. Clear understanding of where we want kids to be when they leave our programs)
- Outreach (be present to the youth in the community; focus on teens who are not in our programs)
- Role models
- Re-vision parish – what can we learn from non-denominational megachurches?
- Better understanding of human development
- Fun and whimsy (Middle School)
- Engage/train YM of parishes notably not involved
- Resources for low income parishes
- Winter 1-day AYC type event
- Comprehensive YM vs. Catechesis
- Adequate catechist training – relational ministry, small group facilitation, etc.
- Disaffiliated
- Parish environment – not appreciative of YM
- Support
- Cultural Differences (2)
- Sow seeds/YM options

### **Other**

- Young adults
- Youth being used by parish for cheap labor
- Commuter parishes – no community

## LISTENING SESSION RESPONSES

Envision what might be:

**What possibilities provide opportunities for more vital, successful, and effective ministry.  
(dream about and design the most preferred future)**

### Parents/Family/Relationships

- Whole family involvement/intergenerational
- Sense of “owned faith” with youth/families
- Family ministry, parent engagement
- Whole family ministry/set plans on how to live it out
- Parents/kids/community value keeping holy the Sabbath
- Parents understand value of Y.M. (Branding YM, what are the benefits)
- Larger online presence with resources for parents and youth (OACE)
- Brainstorm ideas to re-evangelize the parents
- Help us with best practices in ministries and parishes, observe what is working in terms of parent or family ministry, managing volunteers and working with pastors and other parish staff to incorporate youth into the life of the parish
- Bridge between the ages

### Social Media/Technology/Internet

- Easily accessible and top quality media from ArchGH
- Hire media specialist
- Ask a stupid question site in English and Spanish
- Perhaps more resources on how to incorporate technology into our programs

### Formation

- Ending the “gap” between First Communion/Confirmation and Confirmation/Young Adult
- Continuous interest (family)/ programming (parish/AGH) for cradle-to-grave life-long faith formation
- Build/create intentional communities
- Build and strengthen catechists
- Faster curriculum approval (USCCB)
- Youth Confirmation either needs to move to Restored Order or we need a program that looks more like RCIA with Inquiry so that teens are not pressured by parents to make a false profession of faith to get confirmed in the least time at the least cost to parents
- Our parish is small and our pastor does not care for the Life Teen program. I could use some help with programs to do with the kids that are engaging and deeply spiritual. The post-Harvey youth night y’all sent out was great. More things like that would be great.
- Full vocation education

### **Discipleship/Devotion**

- Support discipleship programs/mentoring programs for the youth
- Clear vision of what discipleship looks like
- Embracing ALL (go to the margins)
- Vibrant, active, authentic participation in faith & liturgy
- Faith is not a checklist – goes beyond sacraments

### **Priests/Pastoral Support**

- View youth as valued members TODAY
- Articulate what YM is today to the parish
- Inclusion of youth in various church ministries
- Pastors value comprehensive youth ministry
- No one-eared mickey's
- Parishes are more welcoming

### **General Youth Ministry and Adult Formation**

- Youth and adult mentorship
- Easily accessible and frequently updated guidelines
- Core team formation. Live and online
- Pastoral care of the YM (prayer, making time for self, etc.)
- Larger youth leadership gatherings
- Catholic Speaker lists, (local), Catholic Local musicians, etc. with contact info.
- I very much want to do FTCM and would like a “guidance counselor” to help me sort through how to do this given my limitations of family life and distance
- Offering specific training guidance for your YMs behooves OACE. (FTCM)
- Less disaffiliation
- Multicultural realities in parish/archdiocese (many members/one body)
- Parish collaboration – large gatherings, intensive in nature
- Acts 2: Financial resources dedicated specifically to YM programs
- OACE outreach to YM's – weekly or monthly email or call
  - Mentorships
  - Regular Connects
- Parish vision/mission statement
- Getting someone to come and talk about Suicide and bullying, we have asked for help, but haven't gotten any
- I would like to see more development of youth ministry as a mentoring outreach first and a catechetical ministry second. How can we encourage more home based catechesis that would satisfy both systematic and immediate catechesis giving us more time to engage teens that need to be evangelized? Catechesis, as you know already, is a part of the evangelization process, but

it assumes that the person being catechized is evangelized and wants to be catechized. I could go on, but I think you already know my concerns and you can always contact me for clarification.

- A worship leader workshop and mentorship would be nice to have available to train teen & adult vocalists & musicians to lead worship
- Seminars for YMs and Core Team, Webinars

### **Programs**

- Make events free
- AYC commuter option
- Winter 1-day conference
- Bilingual registration
- Continue the Archdiocesan Youth Council; AYC Conferences; BCYM for all leaders, including volunteers
- Keep having archdiocesan run events for youth
- Please offer the sacraments at gatherings. Prayer services without the sacraments are left wanting. At my parish when I go to mass I am at work. It is nice to go somewhere and receive the Lord and not be working. AYC is Great!
- Deanery located high school activities

## LISTENING SESSION RESPONSES

Imagine the OACE and parish youth ministry five (5) years from now  
What has happened? What is different? How have you contributed to this future?

### Parent/Family/Relationships

- Stronger family life because of programs and resources dedicated to including parents
- Family engagement
- Whole family ministry. More focus on building up the family. Better overlay of FF and Sacramental prep

### Formation

- More than just “family-centered” but a comprehensive intergenerational model
- Shifted paradigm for catechists from “teach” to “share” the faith. Provide training and framework. Identify their gifts
- View service as a response to their faith rather than an obligation/component (Corporal Works of Mercy)
- Whole family ministry. More focus on building up the family. Better overlay of FF and Sacramental prep
- Well-formed core team – leadership, catechetically, relational ministry, discipleship based
- Christocentric

### Priests/Pastoral Support/Parish

- Youth involved in parish, liturgical roles
- More manpower and \$ - starts with parish staff
- Change the parish culture
- Clergy support and visibility (vocation, discernment)
- Create unity plan and follow through (whole parish vision)
- Better compensation
- Meet with parish council to introduce vision
- Be persistent when there is “push back” from within the parish/ministry community
- Prioritize liturgy (Sacraments, Liturgical calendar, family involvement)
- Engage upperclassmen in parish life
- Students return to help YM’s in parish
- Inter-ministry involvement

### **General Youth Ministry and Adult Formation**

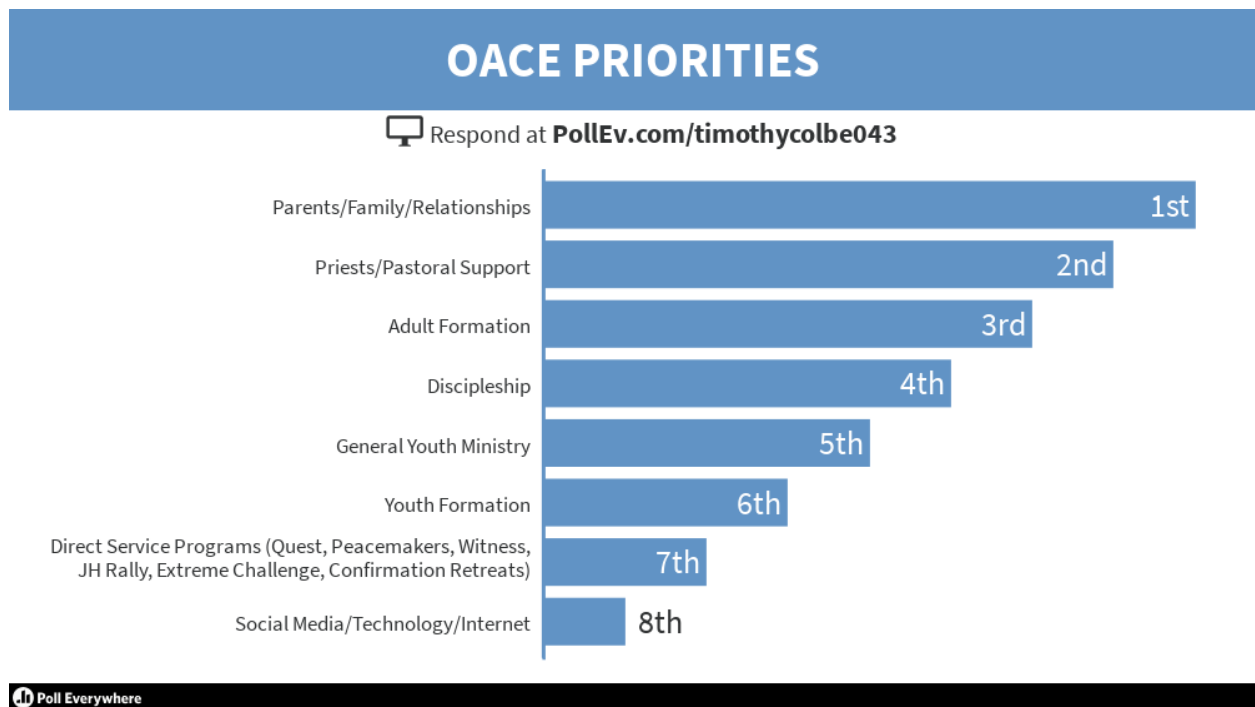
- Moved out of YM silo to a parish/ministry-wide perspective of intentional outreach
- Shifted paradigm for catechists from “teach” to “share” the faith. Provide training and framework. Identify their gifts
- Taught or mentored new leaders/additional mentors in YM
- Stronger community among youth ministers and parishes
- Mentor to mentor

### **Programs**

- Quarterly, rotating, Catholic youth rally around archdiocese in vicariates, evangelization focused, free
- Houston version of Abbey Youth Fest

# PRIORITIES

On June 19, 2019 the OACE Staff gathered with representative youth ministry leaders from each of the Vicariates to review the data from the Listening Sessions, develop priorities, and make recommendations for implementation of high priority items. The chart below represents the priorities that the OACE needs to consider in the near future. Please note that these are considered as areas that need to be developed further. Hence, items like General Youth Ministry and Direct Service are lower priorities because the OACE is currently effective in addressing those items.



# OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS

As part of our June 19<sup>th</sup> gathering the group considered what possible opportunities and threats exist that might impact implementation

## OPPORTUNITIES

What can we take better advantage of?

- Deaneries
- Parish resources (parishioners with different skills/jobs)
- Empowered youth
- National big name programs (LifeTeen, etc.)
- Vibrancy of Church
- Truth is Catholicism
- Media resources
- Relationships
- Parents
- Seminarians
- Strengths and charisms training

What can we leverage given the natural strengths of our parishes and diocese that we benefit from?

- Staff resources/OACE staff
- Deaneries, deanery support
- Experience
- Music resources
- Young priests
- Youths own enthusiasm
- Non-ministry skill sets

What things outside our organization will help us achieve the results we are looking for?

- Social Justice groups
- Catholic Charities
- Resources – Diocesan
- Experienced Personnel
- Diverse parishes
- Music resources
- Family Life Office
- Parent resource groups



- Counseling services
- LifeTeen parent site

## **THREATS**

### What must we pay attention to?

- Popular media
- Trends in youth culture
- Trending laws
- Staff burnout
- How youth are feeling/what they think about issues
- Mental illness
- Struggling teen relationships
- Complacency
- Middle school

### What will jeopardize our efforts?

- Unwelcoming parish staff and environment
- Parish culture
- Rigid Archdiocesan policies
- Lack of mentoring for parish staff/Struggles in transitioning
- Negativity
- Lack of technological resources
- Lack of praying/Spiritual life
- Scandals
- Lack of pastoral support
- Families not exhibiting faith norms

### What things happening in the world outside our church need more attention and examination?

- Scandal
- Political polarization
- Family structure decay
- Drugs
- Financial cuts
- Old ways
- Pastors do not support
- Rise in “spiritual but not religious”
- Social activities taking priority
- Sports/competitive activities
- Globalization mindset
- Culture of complaint/complacency

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## MENTORING

- Incorporate mentoring with BCYM
- Events to build relationships between adults & youth in the parish (social/worship)

## DEANERY HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

- Events annually/quarterly nearby throughout the year – building on events from middle school
- Identify the needs of a deanery, the gifts/talents of different ministries
- Supporting deaneries with volunteer ministers; timing of meetings and events
- Establishing deanery communication (Groupme, Facebook groups/more inclusive email lists)
- More uplifting activities/meetings; applying things from Connects/OACE gatherings to deaneries. Building on/refreshing things from Connects, etc.
- Thinking out of the box. Being attentive to different deanery cultures. Being creative, culture sharing

## OUTREACH TO PASTORS

- Training on how to manage millennials
- Outreach to DRE's and other parish staff
- Combined CONNECT with parish priests and YM's
- Reach out to priest deanery meetings

## CLEAR VISION OF DISCIPLESHIP

- Define discipleship – what does it look like, what is it not?
- Ideas to model it. Helping to learn (or remind) how to be disciples
- Clear expectations
- Training that helps with branding, advertising, selling something that helps show us why it is important
- Helping build or understand pathways or stages of discipleship

## BUILD/STRENGTHEN CATECHISTS

- Online resources
- Personal visit
- Catechist prayer day
- Retreat – become more spiritual
- AYC workshop for catechists

## **VOCATION EDUCATION**

- Letter to pastors
- Video
- Priest formation
- Marriage panels

# A PATH FORWARD

The OACE Staff reviewed all of the feedback and recommendations that were provided to us from across the Archdiocese. After sifting through all that material, and keeping in mind our mission: “Providing leadership, formation and resources in Comprehensive Youth Ministry for parishes to effectively form adolescents into lifelong disciples in the Catholic tradition” we have made the following commitments to better serve pastors, youth ministry leaders, young people and their families. A number of the recommendations above have been absorbed into these commitments. At the core of all these initiatives are two guiding principles: *Christus Vivit* and developing a culture of vocation.

## FORMATION

The Office of Adolescent Catechesis and Evangelization has launched three new initiatives under the umbrella of youth ministry leaders formation, they are:

### **A. Review and update our youth ministry leader and volunteer training**

#### **Project Objectives**

1. Asses the formation needs of YML’s and catechist/CORE in the Archdiocese through surveys and Interviews.
2. Measure/analyze the effectiveness and shortcomings of the current formation/training programs being offered by OACE.
3. Research other certificate and certification programs (ecclesial and secular) for benchmarking and best practices.
4. Develop an outline for a new training program rooted in *Christus Vivit*, National Standards, current research on adolescents and the current state of youth ministry.
5. Develop and implement a marketing plan to communicate the new program and the value of a certificate and/or certification.

#### **Project Deliverables**

1. A new formation/training program for YML’s and catechist/CORE members that meets their ministry needs.
2. A comprehensive infographic/flowchart that communicates the OACE formation process.
3. New training and formation materials as necessitated by the new program.

## **B. Develop processes and guidelines for accompaniment**

### **Project Objectives**

1. Outline a process for accompaniment that can be implemented by parish youth ministry leaders (YML).
2. Develop a tool which can guide OACE staff in implementing an effective process of accompaniment with YML's.
3. Develop a tool which can guide YML's in implementing an effective process of accompaniment with volunteers and teens.
4. Develop training resources for both youth ministry leaders and key volunteers.

### **Project Deliverables**

1. A process/tool rooted in Christus Vivit that will help the OACE staff to accompany YML's and form sustainable YM programs.
2. A process/tool rooted in Christus Vivit that will help YML's accompany Catechist/CORE, teens, & families in the discipleship process.
3. A training program that will help youth ministry leaders and parishes implement the new process/tool listed in deliverable #2.

## **C. In collaboration with the Office of Worship, develop a seminar and guidelines for Exposition, Adoration and liturgical music**

### **Project Objectives**

1. Examine the approved rites regarding Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
2. Examine Church documents on music in liturgy and worship
3. Develop Archdiocesan Guidelines on Exposition, Adoration, liturgy, music.
4. Explore the various prayer forms and their applicability to stages of faith development.

### **Project Deliverables**

1. Late winter 2020 seminar for youth ministry leaders, praise and worship leaders, and clergy
2. Archdiocesan document, including guidelines, on youth, liturgy, and exposition/adoration.

## PROGRAMMING

Two items rose to the surface in regards to direct service programming:

- Deanery level large events
  - We affirm this concept. We encourage deaneries to consider if this would be valuable to their young people. If so, we are available to offer our expertise as consultants to any deanery team that wishes to implement large group gatherings.
  - The OACE will bring this recommendation to the deanery meetings.
- Youth leadership training
  - OACE will conduct a needs assessment by February 1, 2020 to ascertain the interest level for this programming.
  - If the interest level is sufficient, we will develop a plan for implementation

## FAMILIES

1. Utilize the November Connect to initiate a broad conversation on
  - a. The experience of families in our parish ministry.
  - b. Recommended responses to better form parents in developing their children as committed lifelong disciples.
2. Upon the appointment of a Family Life Director:
  - a. Explore avenues of collaboration.
  - b. Meet with Secretariat Director to develop a collaborative Secretariat level plan for focusing on parents and families.

## OUTREACH TO PASTORS

1. Update and promote the hiring guide for pastors.
  - a. Foundational information on I-Gen
  - b. Goals of youth ministry
  - c. What to expect from and points for managing millennial youth ministry leaders
  - d. Job description
2. Attend priest deanery meetings where possible
3. Explore other avenues of outreach and/or Formation with Secretariat Director and with the Continuing Education of Clergy Committee.

# REINVIGORATING PARISH YOUTH MINISTRY

**We are at your service!**

Having completed our visioning and planning process we would like to offer you the opportunity to benefit locally from the work we have done in collaboration with our parish youth ministry leaders. The items that follow are a few specific ways that we can assist you.

**Staff In-service:** Utilizing the research contained in this document as well as other relevant data we will assist the parish staff in understanding the current climate that we face in reaching adolescents and forming them into lifelong disciples.

**Parent Presentations:** Utilizing the research contained in this document as well as other relevant data we will assist parents in understanding the current climate that we face in reaching adolescents and forming them into lifelong disciples. In addition, we will identify practical ways that parents can enhance the likelihood that their children remain lifelong Catholics. Parent presentations are most effective for parents of 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade children since it gives the parents time to make adjustments that can have a positive impact on the faith life of their children.

**Assessment/Visioning/Planning:** An OACE staff member will work with you to develop a process for looking to the future in developing an effective ministry to, with, by, and for the young church.

## HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

There is much in the recent research regarding faith for Millennials and Gen-Z youth and young adults that provide cause for despair. We are a people of hope, we are a people that believes deeply in the kerygma, which provides and sustains our hope. However, hope without action will lead nowhere. It is our strong recommendation that parishes recognize and address the following:

1. Parents are the key to developing lifelong disciples
2. Nothing short of systemic change will stem the tide of disaffiliation
3. Rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic will not lead to success, dare to think outside the box
4. Ministry silos have not served us well, develop a shared, comprehensive vision of formation and accompaniment