
❖ Youth Ministry: In Touch ❖

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Office of Youth Ministry 2.0

By Leigh E Sterten

Communication—quick communication—is everything now, as you well know. Facebook, Twitter, and whatever next new thing will emerge between the time I write this and the time it is published dominate much of our lives and certainly the lives of the young people whom we serve.

Having spent some time looking for a way to best communicate with you, whom the Office of Youth Ministry serves, we are pleased to announce our presence on **flockNote**.

flockNote is an exciting project, for Catholic dioceses and parishes, which is offered completely free of charge to everyone. Rather than try to explain it to you, I will let the website speak for itself: “**flockNote** is an innovative, Catholic website that helps you share notes with the flock. It’s free, too.

“As a leader in the Catholic community, you can send notes to your entire flock—or just a specific group—without the frustrating job of managing multiple mailing lists by email.

“As a member, you can get the latest news and information from the groups

you care about—through the website, email, txt message, and more.



HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

“Simply sign up, sign in and create or join a ‘feed.’ A feed is a group where you ‘feed’ information to your group members.

“For example, as a parish leader, you may want to create a feed for your entire parish. Meaning, every single parishioner can sign up to receive your latest announcement, alert, or other news of interest. Or, create one for a particular group—or all of the groups—within your parish. Big or small, near or far, you can create as many feeds as you’d like and invite interested people to join.

“As a member, you can subscribe to as many feeds as you find interesting—and choose to receive your notes on the website or in your email inbox. Simply select the feed (s) that you’re interested in (daily readings, bloggers, news sources, musicians, parish or

diocese groups, etc.) and keep up to date on all of your Catholic interests! You can subscribe or unsubscribe from any feed at anytime” (www.flocknote.com/about.php).

So, there you are. Our feed is: *Springfield-Cape Girardeau youth ministry*. Go to www.flockNote.com and sign up for your account today. Subscriber Mary Provance of our diocese wrote: “Yes, I hope this spreads. There needs to be a quick and heavily used site where we can all communicate our information. I hope many sign up for this so we better keep in touch, share and grow....”

Do not delay, sign up today! And you might even create a feed or two of your own while you are there. A cross between Facebook and Twitter, **flockNote** is a great communication solution for today’s busy youth ministry leader.

From the Director . . .

Dear Friends:

Greetings! What a wild spring it has been. Little did I realize as I led a retreat for the women of Kimberling City the weekend before the Youth Conference that I had a pretty serious infection. I knew I did not feel well, but tried to tough it out, as I am generally not so tough when I am sick.

Sunday night at Urgent Care was where I first heard the “surgery” word, but I protested that I had a big event the following weekend! Saw the surgeon Wednesday, scheduled me for Thursday, and I spent the weekend recovering and marking time by what was happening at the conference. Let me add that my recovery was quick, and all is well now.

Most importantly I have to thank Rosie, Kim Sellers, and everyone who stepped up to fill the gaps. Sara Leal and the planning team from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, you prepared and executed a wonderful event, from all that I have heard. Thank you.

And thanks for all of the well-wishes I have received. Honestly, while this was a bizarre occurrence (I never worried about the conference—knew all would be well), it may have been a gift in disguise. I learned, that weekend and following, what it means to be appreciated and what it means to be missed. My presence matters—as it does for each of us—and it was nice to be reminded of that.

It has been wonderful hearing the stories, seeing the pictures (thanks, Mandy, for posting those), and “experiencing” the event in a different way.

Next year’s dates are set: March 26-28, 2010, and Anna Scally will be back to keynote and DJ (thanks be to God), after a long hiatus from our diocese. At this point—and I do mean this—I plan on being there! Do you?

God bless you and your ministry with youth. Peace!

Leigh E Sterten, Director of Youth Ministry

Adult Programming & the Future

By Leigh E Sterten

It would be nice to read a publication without hearing about the economy, but, alas, that will not be the case here. As you hopefully know, the Office of Youth Ministry offers two key programs for adult leaders, the Youth Ministry Leadership Conference (YMLC) and the Retreat for Adults in Youth Ministry (no clever acronym).

While I have never been concerned with numbers for these events, this time of great fiscal responsibility forces the issue. This past year, we had a great YMLC on liturgy and youth, presented by Robert Feduccia. Nine people plus Robert and me attended.

I led the retreat in February, on saying yes to

Jesus—again, and 11 people plus Rosie and me were there. Both great events, both important events, but extremely small groups in attendance. I say this not in any guilt-inflicting way, as I know you are busy people with jobs and lives, but offering these events in the future will be a serious challenge.

We have a little time before the next adult programs would normally take place, fall 2010 and winter 2011, so I would really like to hear from you what would best meet your needs in these areas.

One thing I am strongly

considering is collaborating with other offices, perhaps Religious Education and Family Ministries, to provide events for multiple ministries, especially because many of you wear multiple hats.

However, in the meantime, if you have an opinion, please drop me an e-mail or letter (you can also post it in flockNote). My plan is to develop a web-based survey asking about many of our services and how we can better meet your needs, so stay tuned for more information on that.

Please know that serving the adults who serve youth is primary for the OYM and we will always seek out ways to do just that. Shrinking budgets or not, the mission is the ministry, and we will never forget it.



RESOURCE PAGE

The Executive Summary of the National Symposium on Adolescent catechesis

From the National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis

The waters of catechesis have been flowing for several millennia, leading believers to a way of life rooted in Jesus Christ. Over the years the landscape of catechesis and formation in Christ, especially of the young, has been altered by such forces as culture, technology, media and family. More recently, key research findings such as the *National Study of Youth and Religion* point toward a substantial block occurring in the religious formation of young people (and parents) today. This cultural and societal dam to religious growth has challenged our current catechetical mentalities; calling the Church to review and renew the systems, models and methods that were once used to catechize adolescents. This is the reality which gave rise to the National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis (NIAC) and its cornerstone event, the National Symposium on Adolescent Catechesis.

The four day National Symposium was held near Baltimore in Linthicum Heights, MD in November, 2008 and served as the second step in a seven year National Initiative facilitated by the Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis, a collective effort by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, the National Catholic Educational Association, the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, with support from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Symposium began with a provoking question: *“What is necessary for effective adolescent catechesis in the Catholic Church given the current and emerging environments in the United States?”*

The one hundred and eighteen academicians, practitioners, and national leaders attending the National Symposium on Adolescent Catechesis proved to be an impressive think tank. Together they represented fifteen national organizations, ten universities, seven publishers, and numerous parishes, schools, diocesan officials and bishops from over thirty-five dioceses. During the Symposium, participants heard from experts in adolescence and catechesis as

well as reflections on those practicing in the field and even of young people themselves through video interviews and a live “fish bowl” session. Symposium participants joined in table groups for facilitated discussions covering issues such as the critical cultural realities facing young people, outcomes of effective catechesis, characteristics of the formative community, systems and approaches of catechesis, and emerging directions.

Through this dynamic Symposium process, several themes emerged:

Collaboration

The Symposium was collaboration at its best. The national organizations comprising the Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis joined together and prepared for three years to produce the process that became the Symposium. Colleagues in parishes, schools, dioceses, organizations, and universities dialogued, each offering their unique perspective that led the entire

group toward a shared direction. For catechesis to be successful, this model needs to be replicated at both the diocesan and local levels.

Diversity

The reality of the Catholic Church in the United States is that it is not a homogenous community. It is full of the rich diversity of cultures, economies, and physical settings. Young people are immersed in a variety of educational, familial, and cultural experiences. This diversity need not only be respected, but embraced. Approaches to catechesis must also be diverse, seeking to capitalize on the unique experiences and gifts of the community in which adolescents are immersed.

Comprehensiveness

Catechesis must be evangelizing—engaging the heart of young people to know and love the One who loved them first, Jesus Christ. The key to effective catechesis is through addressing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the adolescent. The content of



catechesis must be comprehensive, providing a strong understanding of the teaching and practices of the Catholic faith while immersing youth in the life and mission of the Church through service and ministry. Bishop Richard Malone of Portland, Maine indicated in his general session address that the heart of the issue is to offer a catechesis that “can arouse faith in Christ as well as form, inform, and transform that faith.”

Supporting and Forming Family Faith

Fostering the faith of the parent, encouraging family faith rituals, and supporting families in their diversity of experiences will provide the critical foundation young people need to grow in their lives as active Catholics. To take this step with the next generation, new energy and focus must be given to helping married couples as they grow into formative families of faith.

Formation of Catechists

Regarding Catholic school teachers, parish catechists and youth ministers, Boston College professor, Dr. Thomas Groome, suggested in his presentation that a new comprehensive and intensive national focus on formation is needed to provide the skills and knowledge for these individuals to catechize with confidence.

Challenging the Status Quo

Sean Reynolds, Director of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, challenged the participants on whether “our preoccupation with conventional religious education” has prevented us from analyzing the context in which catechesis occurs. The resulting discussion identified that for adolescent catechesis to be successful, those involved in the development must not be afraid to look at the entire system in which catechesis is immersed.

The Symposium process led to the development of several areas of focus for continued work. These areas provide a tentative framework that will serve to structure the efforts of the National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis.

Ministry with parents and families—providing the support needed to grow as a family in faith.

Cultural considerations—seeking to raise awareness of the needs of the variety of communities as well as increasing the “cultural competency” of those in ministry.

Formation and training—surveying the field to

identify best practices as well as gaps in current training programs and working together with others to develop new formation models to meet the current and future needs of those involved in adolescent catechesis.

Resources—identify and placing the richness of the foundational documents in evangelization and catechesis into the hands of those catechizing, and insuring all current and future resources are accessible and multi-lingual.

Advocacy—clarifying the message of effective adolescent catechesis, strengthening the collaborative efforts of diverse organizations and agencies, and communicating these messages to all who are involved and impacted.

Research—establishing what it means to be effective in catechesis, seeking to discover not only what is working, but what is not, as well as identifying effective practices in a variety of ministerial settings.

Models and methodology—developing practical and engaging methods in light of the larger narrative and the system through which adolescent catechesis is best expressed so that local models can be effectively personalized for each unique situation and culture.

The post Symposium steps for the Partnership on Adolescent Catechesis will be to map out the directions set forth through the Symposium process by working with the task groups listed above to develop and prioritize specific strategies that will serve as the backbone for the next steps of the National Initiative. Additional steps involve the conduction and support of dozens of “Virtual Symposiums” being sponsored locally across the country in 2009 and the publication in April of the Symposium presentations and outcomes in a second sourcebook that will be available through each Partnership organization.

Given the multitude of strategies already proposed by the task groups, it is clear that the reality of the work ahead for those who are involved in adolescent catechesis is plentiful, but the common consensus stated clearly at the Symposium is that our young people are worth it. The thirst for comprehensive faith formation is both imminent and widespread, yet more than ever before, we are up to the task.

For additional information, contact Ela Milewska, NIAC project coordinator, at elam@nfcym.org. Used with permission

IN TOUCH . . . WITH RESOURCES

I'm Glad You Asked: 60 Common Questions Catholics Have About the Bible, Fr. Mark R. Pierce. Saint Mary's Press, 2008. \$12.95

Living as we do in the "buckle of the Bible belt," this book is sure to be a welcome addition to any youth ministry library or youth room coffee table.

Coming from the perspective that questions are good, Fr. Pierce organizes the questions and answers around these question topics: reading the Bible, difficult Scripture passages, and common questions about the faith from non-Catholic friends.

Questions that he addresses include: did Jesus have brothers and sisters? Are we justified by faith or works? And are Catholics "born again?" In addition to being a great resource book to have around, this would also be a great gift for youth receiving the sacrament of confirmation.

Catholic Quick View, Second Edition: Beliefs, Definitions, Prayers, Practices, Saints, and Symbols, Marilyn Kielbasa, Robert Feduccia Jr., and Brian Singer-Towns. Saint Mary's Press, 2008. \$7.95

Newly revised, the title of this book pretty much explains the contents. The SMP catalog describes it as a "handy, concise book offering speedy access to some of the core elements of Catholicism, including beliefs, prayers, rituals, over 300 terms and definitions, plus two new sections on patron saints and their causes and a new illustrated guide of Catholic signs and symbols."

Did you know that DeSales Catholic Bookstore in Springfield offers parishes a 20% discount? You can shop their website or order by phone. (www.desalescatholicbookstore.com)

Idea Corner

by Leigh E Sterten

This idea is actually aimed at the regional level, so think a little beyond parish as you read about it. The good folks of Region 2 implemented this idea in February and are so pleased that they plan to continue it in the fall.

The idea is to rotate events, one per month, across several parishes. So, in Region 2 it looked like this: February, Mardi Gras party, Billings; March, St. Patrick's day party, Monett; April, Spring Fling, Verona; and May, Beach Party, Aurora.

The parishes agreed in advance on the grade levels of youth to which each event would be open, as well as the

starting time. Generally, they try to begin each night with Mass; the flow of the evening, though, is completely up to the host parish.

Those participating say that the youth have enjoyed making new friends in the region, and were excited to see many of these friends at the diocesan Youth Conference in March.

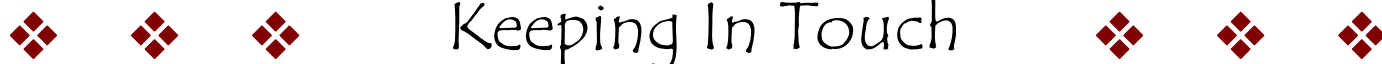
There have been a few bumps, rescheduling due to conflict or weather, but they plan to pick up the schedule in September, with one possible summer gathering in the works. This may work for your region, or at least cluster of parishes, so consider talking with others and giving it a try!

**NCYC
Deadlines:**

**June 15 =
Preliminary
Registration
Information Form**

**July 15 =
\$ 100 deposit
per person &
Interest Form**

Youth Ministry: In Touch is a publication of the Office of Youth Ministry, 601 S Jefferson Ave, Springfield, MO 65806. (417) 866-0841. Email: lsternten@dioscg.org. The purpose of this publication is to serve as a means of communication between the OYM and the youth ministry community in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Letters to the editor are welcome; letters must be signed and are published at the discretion of the editor. Ms. Leigh E Sterten, Director and Editor Mrs. Rosie Francka, Administrative Assistant



Keeping In Touch

Important Dates, Programs, Meetings, and Events

<p>JUNE 7 Godparents' day, which I happen to appreciate, given I am not a mother. Thank you, Lord, for my three beautiful godchildren.</p>	<p>JUNE 9 Virtus session, Branson, 6:30-9:30 pm. Leigh is facilitating. If possible, register in advance at www.virtus.org.</p>	<p>JUNE 13 Region 1 hosts a youth ministry training day at St. Peter, Joplin, 10 am to 5 pm. Topics still TBD, but hope to see the region there.</p>	<p>JUNE 15-19 First, NCYC deadline, as noted on page 5. Also, camp season begins with 1F in Fredericktown. Thanks to all who helped clean up storm damage!</p>	<p>JUNE 21 Fathers' day, a time to remember and appreciate dad and all he does. How will you honor the dads in your parish?</p>
<p>JUNE 22-26 Camp 2F takes place. Thanks to our many staff members, led by Virginia, who volunteer their time for our young people.</p>	<p>JUNE 22-26 Leigh is going to observe ND Vision, a leadership training program for high school youth. We will have a review in the fall issue (the last to be printed on paper!).</p>	<p>JULY 6-10 Camp 3F, the end of their season, and 1C, the beginning in Cassville. Thanks to our priest spiritual directors and all who come for the sacrament of reconciliation.</p>	<p>JULY 13-17 Camp 2C takes place. Thanks to Mandy, Bobbi, and all the staff who work so hard each summer. We appreciate all you do.</p>	<p>JULY 15 NCYC deadline, the first involving money: \$100 per person deposit is due, along with the Interest Form. Thanks for being on time!</p>
<p>JULY 20-24 Camp 3C, the halfway point. Let us pray for all our young campers this summer, that they may experience Christ through Camp Re-NEW-All.</p>	<p>JULY 27-31 Camp Re-NEW-All session 4C takes place, at Roaring River State Park in Cassville. Praying for cool breezes...</p>	<p>AUGUST 3-7 Camp wraps up with session 5C. Thanks to all those people and companies that donated items in order to reduce the budget strain!</p>	<p>AUGUST 15 Feast of the Assumption of Mary, also tentative date for Region 3 meeting. More to come...</p>	<p>AUGUST 17 Region 2 youth ministers' meeting, Aurora, 7-8:30 pm. Please RSVP if unable to attend. Check out the Idea Corner on page 5!</p>
<p>AUGUST 25-28 The NFCYM Board of Directors' meeting, which Leigh will be attending, in Monterey, CA.</p>		<p>SEPTEMBER 7 Labor Day—the unofficial end of summer. School is back in session; welcome to all youth entering youth ministry programs in parishes.</p>		