

Starting a Young Adult Ministry: 10 Steps

I. A proposed step-by-step method to start a ministry in your parish.

- 1) **Discern the Need:** Someone (a young adult, a parent, a priest, or religious) determines that young adult ministry is vital to the parish and that there are a good number of young adults in the pews who would participate.
- 2) **Connect with Parish Staff and Pastor:** This person should connect with a parish staff member (Director of Faith Formation, Youth Minister, Director of Evangelization, etc.) to discuss starting up a young adult ministry at the parish. This staff member will help determine the best way to request a meeting with the pastor to make an official request.
- 3) **Begin Building the Leadership Team:** Once the pastor has approved the forming of a new ministry, all those involved will meet to discuss who else from the parish would be good to invite into leadership. Begin making initial invitations to these young adults. From this point forward in the process, all involved in leadership should approach the ministry with a spirit of **listening**.
 - a. Whenever possible, ask young adults for their opinions about the ministry. Make sure to listen and record their responses.
 - b. Send out a survey to ask young adults for feedback and gather many responses.
 - c. Begin praying for the ministry and the young adults God wants to reach through the ministry.
- 4) **Vision and Mission:** Begin to develop the Vision and Mission for the young adult ministry. Here are some questions to consider when developing these goals:
 - a. Who are you serving? (Emerging Young Adults: Ages 18-22; Professional Young Adult Singles: 20s and 30s; Young Married Couples: 20s, and 30s; Young Married Couples with Children: 20s, and 30s.)
 - b. Why is it important to serve this group?
 - c. How are you planning on serving the needs of this demographic? Keep in mind the four areas of focus for any ministry (correlated with goals listed in *Sons & Daughters of Light*):
 - i. **Social:** Especially in the beginning phase, it is important to allow time for pure social interactions. It is also good to allow these interactions to happen organically.
 - ii. **Catechesis:** Learn more about the faith.
 - iii. **Prayer:** Pray, both individually and communally. If possible, it's always good to offer sacraments of Eucharist and confession.
 - iv. **Service:** We are all called to serve those in need. Times of service can help to bond the group in a unique way.
- 5) **Plan a Kickoff Event:** Determine what sort of event can be used to gather the young adults for the first time. This should be a "big draw" event that is low commitment for young adults to attend and is focused on being social in order to gather people for the first time. Begin working with team to plan and advertise this event to the parish.
 - a. Give yourself enough time to make proper preparations for the event.
 - b. Make sure to advertise through parish outlets (bulletin, pulpit announcements, table after Masses, etc.) for at least 3-4 weeks in advance of the event.
- 6) **Strategize for a Continuing Event:** Make a basic plan for what the regular ministry will look like. This plan may change within the first year, and that's okay. Here are some things to consider:

- a. The logistics, such as the specific parish facility you wish to use,
- b. The day and time to meet.
- c. The funding needed.
- d. The methods of promotion.
- e. The list of topics, speakers, videos, and group formats.
- f. The roles needed to create a Leadership Team.

7) Be Intentional at Kickoff Event: At the kickoff event, the Leadership Team should be prepared for the following:

- a. Collect contact information from all young adults who show up.
- b. Introduce the plan for the ministry going forward from the event.
- c. Spend time getting to know the people who attend. Along with pleasant conversation, be ready to ask questions about what the young adults would be interested in for this ministry. Listen to the responses and record after the conversation ends.

8) Begin Regular Young Adult Ministry Meetings: In this initial phase, the organization and execution of these events may be a little messy. That's okay! Work as a team toward smoothing out details as you go.

- a. Coordinator should take notes of the details involved in running one night.
- b. The details include: determining activity/topic for the night, reserving a room at the parish, providing snacks, preparing any technology that may be needed, preparing any handouts or small group questions needed for the night, welcoming the young adults as they arrive, collecting contact information from any newcomers, and cleaning everything up at the end.

9) Establish a Healthy, Self-Sustaining Leadership Team: Begin to invite more young adults to participate in the leadership team. Here are a few things to consider:

- a. Invite people who have come to multiple events in the initial stage. This is a good sign that they are committed to the ministry and want to see it succeed.
- b. Invite each person for a SPECIFIC ROLE. If you have seen something in one of the young adults that you think would help them succeed in one of the various roles, ask that person for that specific role. He/she is far more likely to say yes to helping if they feel appreciated and known.
- c. Make sure to reinforce the overall Vision and Mission of the ministry as you invite people into leadership.
- d. Recruiting for the Leadership Team never ends. The time of Young Adulthood is a transitional time, and as soon as a healthy team is established, it is common to see several members back down due to life transitions (getting married, starting a new job, moving away, etc.). Train every member of your team to watch for other young adults to invite into the ministry.
- e. All involved in Leadership Team should be reminded to pray for the success of the ministry.

10) Outreach and Welcome: In order for the ministry to continue to succeed, everyone on team should be committed to continuous outreach to invite newcomers into the ministry. Consider how to reach out to the following groups:

- a. High School Seniors from Parish
- b. College Students from Parish
- c. Fallen Away Catholics
- d. Non-Catholics