

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY GUIDELINES

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Dear Faithful,

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, we are pleased to offer the parishes, clergy and youth workers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the revised *Young Adult Ministry Guidelines*.

These *Guidelines* are offered to assist the local parish in continuing to create and enhance their Young Adult Ministry. These are guidelines—not by-laws. They are in no way intended to be the ultimate authority in Young Adult Ministry programming, however, they are considered to be best practices for the ministry.

How do we effectively minister to young adults? How do we truly incorporate them into the living body of Christ? How do they become the leaders of today and tomorrow to usher our sacred Faith to the next generation? As a Church of Christ, we must be willing to incorporate all members into the Body. A great way of doing this is to have our young adults participate in all aspects of the Church, allowing them to fully experience the Orthodox Faith.

Using the basic principles of the Young Adult Ministry—*worship, fellowship, service and witness*—we pray that these *Young Adult Ministry Guidelines* will assist you in ministering to our young adults on their journey toward salvation.

These *Guidelines* have been reviewed and revised by the Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, along with parish clergy and young adults themselves. The Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team is comprised of the National Department and each Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry throughout our Archdiocese.

On behalf of this team, I pray that these *Guidelines* will assist you in your Young Adult Ministry and will be a source of inspiration to all who read them.

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WHAT IS YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY?

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is to coordinate the youth and young adult ministries of the national church in collaboration with Metropolis Directors; by providing standardized resources and training, this unified national ministry team enables youth workers, young people, and their families to better understand and fully experience the Orthodox Christian Faith.

The *Young Adult Ministry* is a ministry of the Department. The mission of Young Adult Ministry is to cultivate and educate our young adults, leading them to the fullness of the Faith and likeness of God; by utilizing the four circles of Christian living, *worship, fellowship, service, and witness*, young adults are integrated into the life of the Church enabling them to become active members of the body of Christ.

MINISTRY VS. ORGANIZATION

Young Adult Ministry is a ministry of the Church. It is not an organization or club, but simply a gathering of the faithful of the Church who share the same ages and common interests. It is a spiritual ministry, based on the theological tenets of the Orthodox Christian Faith.

PARTICIPANTS VS. MEMBERS

Belonging to a Young Adult Ministry program depends solely on being an Orthodox Christian. A young adult who participates is not classified as a member or non-member—if they are a member of the Faith, they belong! That is, they are participants rather than members. If a non-Orthodox wishes to participate in the young adult program, welcome and offer ministry to them.

GUIDELINES VS. CONSTITUTION

Since the young adult program is a ministry and not an organization or club, guidelines exist rather than a constitution. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries offers these guidelines to inform and direct the faithful as to the ecclesiastical purpose of Young Adult Ministry, stressing the four characteristics of worship, fellowship, service, and witness.

WHO IT SERVES

The Young Adult Ministry ministers to young adults of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, ages 18 to 35 years old. There appears to be two general groups within the Young Adult Ministry range, the college-aged group (18-25) and the career-aged group (25-35). Within these groups there can also be many more subsets: married, with children, graduate school, etc. Each individual Young Adult Ministry should strive to minister to all young adults in the community as they transition through their different life stages.

Due to the demographics of young adults in some communities, it may be more appropriate to provide ministry to them in separate groups (i.e. OCF, young married, etc.). Try to bring these groups together for dialogue and interaction on occasion, as each group will benefit from the life stages of the others. However you organize your ministry, pay special attention to the needs of the individual young adults in the group, so that all are benefiting from the ministry.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY FOUNDATION

Young adults are faced with the challenge of prioritizing many aspects of their lives. Spiritual, professional, and social growth all require considerable effort on the part of the young adult. Because our broader culture places greater emphasis on professional and social development, the spiritual lives of our young adults often fall to the waste side. For these reasons, the positive teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Church must become a living presence in the lives of our young adults. This makes ministry to them not an option, but rather a necessity.

But what is ministry? The word **minister** means to give aid to those in need. Therefore, a ministry of the Orthodox Church gives aid as part of the Body of Christ. A young adult becomes a full member of this Body at their baptism and/or chrismation. The foundation of all Young Adult Ministry is the cultivation and education of our young adults, so that they may become **active** members of the Body of Christ. Young Adult Ministry is but one mean to this end; it must not stand alone, but rather be incorporated into the entire life of the Church and its mission.

PATRON SAINT FOR YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

O, First Martyr and Apostle of Christ, you fought the good fight. You exposed the perversion of the persecutors, for when you were killed by stoning of the hands of the wicked men, you received a crown from the Right Hand on high.

Troparion St. Stephen

Saint Stephen is the patron saint of Young Adult Ministry in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. His total commitment to Jesus Christ shines as an example, guiding the ministry. St. Stephen was one of the first Deacons ordained in the church. At a young age, he actively preached the Gospel of Christ in Jerusalem where he was criticized and persecuted by many Jewish leaders. Stephen was chased outside the walls of Jerusalem and stoned to death. As his persecutors stoned him, he prayed, "Lord do not charge them with this crime," and he took his last breath. Stephen is an example to be followed, an important witness during an age when many Orthodox Christians died for their faith. The witness of Stephen and other martyrs is a challenge which all of us are called to meet. He is commemorated each year on December 27th. To learn more about Stephen's life and ministry, read the Book of Acts, Chapters 6 and 7.

PRAYER FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Lord, as we struggle for meaning and purpose in life, Guide us with Your helping hand. Teach us to be aware of God's abiding love, and stir our concern for our fellow man. We commit to You our lives in the spirit of dedication and obedience so that we may be spiritually renewed through the teaching of our Faith and the guidance of the Orthodox Church.

For You are the God that loves mankind and to You we ascribe Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen

THE YOUNG ADULT

The young adult period is full of transitions. Transitions occur from high school to college, college to career, single life to married life, dependence to independence. With all of the new demands in the young adult's life, it is an important time for him/her to be actively involved in the life of the church. Often times just the opposite occurs. Church is replaced with school, careers, relationships, and money. Therefore, Young Adult Ministry should strive to keep the young adult involved in the life of the church, and also to reintroduce the church to those young adults whose lives have taken them away.

Young adults benefit from each other's differing perspectives that result from their different stages in life. It is equally important to remember that they also have different needs. Striking a balance between integrating the different young adults while still meeting their individual needs is the challenge. For more resources about young adults, please see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

COLLEGE AGE (18-25)

As high school graduates, new young adults are faced with many decisions concerning education, money, morality, and other issues that come with newfound independence. Some go to college, others go to work. They are meeting new people and faced with many different ideas and beliefs. Although this group of young adults have reached a new level of independence from their families, often times they are still financially dependent upon their parents. These individuals are very much adults, but often are not treated like it. Many have left their homes for the first time and are living at school or away. Often times college students are not on a campus with an Orthodox Church nearby or an OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship) chapter. There are dozens of other denominations and faiths willing to make them their own. As they wind up their college years, they face more transitions. Where will they live? What will they do? How will they pay for things?

CAREER AGE (25-35)

At this age, careers can overwhelm a young adult's life, leaving him/her little time for anything else. This can also be a period where they have financial resources but have limited time to use them. They are settling into adult-life with all the responsibilities of financial stresses and the decisions that usually accompany them. Many of the issues facing this group differ from those of the college-age young adults. While college-age young adults are exploring their lives, career age young adults are searching to settle their lives. They are trying to find balance between church, work, family and friends.

MARRIED YOUNG ADULTS

Often times we forget Young Adult Ministry includes not only single young adults, but married young adults as well. There are many issues newly married couples face, especially as they begin a family. It is important for them as individuals, as a couple, and as a family, to continue in their spiritual growth for the good of their marriage and family.

THE FOUR CIRCLES

It is recommended that Young Adult Ministry integrate the following elements into all aspects of their programming: worship, fellowship, service, and witness. An exceptional program will see these elements not as four separate entities, but as four interlocking circles that overlap and build on one another. A healthy young adult program keeps these aspects in balance.

WORSHIP (LITURGLIA)

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.”

Psalm 95:6-7

As Orthodox Christians, we believe that God reveals Himself through Holy Tradition and Scripture. *Worship* is the living expression of these, and is an important element in ministering to our young adults; they must remain active participants in the liturgical life of the Church.

Young adults experience **WORSHIP** *by:*

- ✦ Actively participating in private and corporate prayer.
- ✦ Actively participating in the Divine Services and Sacraments of the Church (not only Liturgy, but the entire cycle of worship).
- ✦ Becoming familiar with different services of the Church and their role in the service (Paraklesis, Vespers, Compline, etc.).
- ✦ Praying for those who are sick or in need.
- ✦ Becoming familiar with prayers for morning, evening and different occasions, especially the book of Psalms.
- ✦ Observing the Church calendar, including the prescribed Feasts and Fasts.
- ✦ Learning the hymns of the Church and using them in prayer.
- ✦ Offering readings, chanting or participating in the choir.
- ✦ Reading the Bible and other religious writings.

FELLOWSHIP (KOINONIA)

“Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.”

Psalm 133:1

Fellowship is the way Orthodox Christians integrate their faith with daily life. It is sacred when Orthodox Christians gather together in our Lord’s name. The relationship of the Holy Trinity is the perfect model of Fellowship—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share perfect communion and exist in perfect love with each other. By gathering together in *fellowship* and experiencing this love, we emulate the relationship of the Trinity and develop our life in Christ.

Young Adults experience **FELLOWSHIP** *by:*

- ✦ Attending Church, young adult gatherings, and other Church related activities.
- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored camps and retreat programs.

- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored athletic programs, ethnic dancing, etc.
- ✦ Participating in Inter-Orthodox activities.
- ✦ Watching films, videos, and multimedia presentations that can spark discussion.
- ✦ Watching performances of religious productions, musicals, etc.
- ✦ Participating in day or overnight outings together.
- ✦ Volunteering either at the parish or in the local community.
- ✦ Participating in group activities on various topics, books, movies, music, etc.

SERVICE (*DLAKONIA*)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve . . .”

Mark 10:45

Christ came to serve, not to be served. Young adults are urged to do the same. They honor and glorify God by loving and serving humanity in His name, as an offering of good works. Young adults can use their God-given talent to serve. For Orthodox Christians, *service* to God and community is a way of life, a way of living one’s Faith. As Jesus Christ our Lord said, “Let your light so shine for men, that they may see your good works and glorify you Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). *Service* is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian’s life.

Too often, we look at our young adults and wonder how we can help them. We need to inspire them toward a life of *service*. How can our young adults use their God-given gifts in *service* to those in need and less fortunate? How can they be the people who respond to His call in Matthew 25:31-46, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those in prison. Responding to these human needs is the true meaning of *service*.

Young Adults experience SERVICE by:

- ✦ Offering their personal stewardship—giving of time, talents, and treasure—to both the church and local community charities.
- ✦ Participating in work projects to beautify and maintain the parish or local community.
- ✦ Reaching out to the elderly, the sick, the shut-ins, etc.
- ✦ Supporting and participating in missions abroad and at home.
- ✦ Supporting Archdiocesan, Metropolitan, and Parish ministries like Saint Basil Academy, Philoptochos, Hellenic College/Holy Cross, St. Michael’s Home, etc.
- ✦ Supporting Inter-Orthodox organizations endorsed by SCOBA, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas: International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS), Orthodox Christian Network (OCN), etc.
- ✦ Volunteering for a local soup kitchen or other community charities.
- ✦ Working with younger ministry groups in the parish or children in the local community.

WITNESS (*MARTYRIA*)

“For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”

Acts 22:15

Man is both a spiritual and physical being. Unfortunately this spiritual reality is not always expressed in the material world. In order to be true to oneself and to the Orthodox Christian Faith, young people should strive to exemplify the teaching of the Church. We are witnessing our faith when we live as Christ taught us to live, letting Christ shine in all that we do to those around us. This is the true meaning of witness.

Young adults experience WITNESS by:

- ✦ Learning about Christ’s teachings and living them.

- ✦ Learning about the Saints' great witness to the faith and imitating their example.
- ✦ Finding answers to questions they or others have about the faith.
- ✦ Making newcomers feel welcome.
- ✦ Inviting a non-Orthodox friend to a Church service or young adult event.
- ✦ Making the sign of the Cross before every meal—no matter where they are.
- ✦ Supporting and participating in mission work locally and abroad.
- ✦ Teaching children about the faith.
- ✦ Maintaining Christian integrity in all areas of their lives.
- ✦ Letting Christ's love shine in all they do.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY MODEL

The structure of a Young Adult Ministry will depend on the specific needs of each individual parish. The following recommendations take into consideration what is best practice for ministering to this population and suggests a model based on that information. Within the suggested model, there is flexibility so that adjustments may be made to best meet the needs of each individual ministry. If you are just starting a Young Adult Ministry in your parish or region, be sure to read the *How to Organize Young Adult Ministry* section in these guidelines.

An effective young adult program must be a ministry for young adults, by young adults. Through the guidance of a Spiritual Father, young adults should play the major role in deciding what format the ministry will take. It is imperative that everyone involved in the ministry works toward a common goal: to grow nearer to Christ in all things.

YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Young Adult Leadership Team will be responsible for planning and leading all Young Adult Ministry activities. This team is made up of the parish priest, youth director, and young adult leaders. Young adult leadership roles that can be helpful to the ministry include the following: coordinator, assistant coordinator, Worship chairperson, Fellowship chairperson, Service chairperson, and Witness chairperson. The coordinator is responsible for making sure all team members are kept informed and that all efforts are in line with the common goal of the ministry. All members of the team should have clear roles and responsibilities; these should be defined before the year begins.

In addition to planning and overseeing all young adult activities, the Young Adult Leadership Team should work to cultivate additional leadership within the other young adults who participate in the ministry. Too often, a young adult program is based on the leadership of one or two individuals. When these people move on or burnout, the ministry disappears. All young adults should take some responsibility for the group at one point or another. By setting this as a goal, the ministry will be constantly training new leaders and providing support for current ones.

When we think of leadership, we instinctively think of people in power. As Christians, Christ gave us a living example of leadership:

“And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”

Mark 10:44-45

Christ led by serving others, and we are called to do the same. This type of leadership, servant leadership, is key to the ministry.

REGIONAL YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

If your Young Adult Ministry involves several Orthodox parishes in a close geographic area, there are additional recommendations for consideration. It is imperative that there be a Spiritual Father who attends all activities. It is the role of the Spiritual Father to keep the clergy of the other involved parishes informed of all aspects of the ministry. Always invite all clergy to participate in activities and to have an active role in the ministry. It is also important that the regional Young Adult Ministry Team be made up of representatives from all of the parishes involved. This will aid in the communication and participation of all the parishes.

SELECTION OF YOUNG ADULT LEADERS

Young Adult Ministry is not a popularity club or legal voting body; it is a ministry of the Church. For this reason, it is recommended that young adults apply and be appointed for positions of leadership within the committee. The application process should explore why the young adult wants to serve, what talents they have to offer, and in what areas they might need assistance (see *Appendix A* for a sample application). The talents of all young adults interested in leadership roles should be utilized in some way to further the ministry. The parish priest, youth director, and young adults work together to select and appoint young adult leaders. The recommended tenure of these positions is one year, beginning in September. The ministry team should also look for opportunities to include those young adults who did not apply for leadership positions in service to the ministry.

ROLES IN YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

It takes many people to sustain a ministry: some people are leaders, others followers; some people have active roles, others have passive roles; some people are consultants, others implementers. Each role has its own set of responsibilities. In a strong ministry, responsibilities are clear and distributed amongst different people. Whatever the roles, all should be working towards the common goal of the ministry. Below are vital roles for Young Adult Ministry. If the ministry is missing any of these roles, the Young Adult Leadership Team should address how each role can still be fulfilled.

ARCHDIOCESAN DEPARTMENT

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is located on the grounds of Saint Basil Academy in New York. The Department creates and distributes resources for parish ministry, as well as oversees the Office of Ionian Village and Camping Ministries. The Department coordinates the *Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team*, which is made up of the National Department and each Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This team meets twice a year and collaborates throughout the year to coordinate national and regional youth and young adult ministries. For information on contacting the Archdiocesan Department, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these Guidelines.

METROPOLIS OFFICES

The Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries oversees all youth and young adult activities within their respective Metropolis. These directors are trained not only in Theology, but also in the basic tenets of youth ministry. They are an excellent resource for local parish programming and should be called upon for assistance. For information on contacting your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

NATIONAL YOUNG ADULT COMMITTEE

This committee consists of the two young adult representatives from each Metropolis and members

of the Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team. This team meets during the year to sustain the Young Adult Ministry throughout the Archdiocese. These representatives have been trained in the tenets of young adult ministry and are an excellent resource to assist the ministry in their respective Metropolis. To find out who the representatives are for a specific Metropolis, contact the Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

PARISH PRIEST

The parish priest is responsible for the spiritual well being of the entire parish. Under the direction of the Metropolis Hierarchy, the parish priest ministers to all of the parishioners and groups of the parish. The Young Adult Ministry is a part of his overall ministry. It is imperative that the priest be active in this ministry by guiding and working with the young adults in all aspects of the ministry, as well as attending all activities.

PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council represents the parish as a whole. As Young Adult Ministry is part of the overall ministry of the church, it is important that the parish council be kept informed of the ministry activities. The parish council should provide the necessary support through the parish budget and other resources to help sustain the young adult ministry. It is best if one of the young adults serves as a liaison between Young Adult Ministry and the parish council. If there is a young adult serving on the parish council itself, it is recommended that he/she act as the liaison, attending all ministry activities.

PARISH YOUTH DIRECTOR

Under the direction of the parish priest, the parish youth director is responsible for all youth and young adult ministry in the parish. Specifically for Young Adult Ministry, the parish youth director oversees the work of the young adult leaders, ministering to them so they might minister to other young adults. The youth director should guide the young adult leaders in order to ensure a balance program so that the best opportunity for ministry exists. The parish youth director should be trained not only in the Theology of the Church, but also in the field of young adult ministry.

YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Under the direction of the parish priest and youth director, the Young Adult Ministry Team will be responsible for planning and implementing all young adult group activities. These young adult leaders are responsible for working with the other young adults in the group. They must make sure everyone is involved and contributing. They should lead by delegation—giving everyone a role in activities. At the beginning of the young adult year, this team ought to be part of a special leadership training program that strengthens faith and develops techniques for Orthodox Christian Leadership and Young Adult Ministry.

YOUNG ADULTS

The true role of young adults is to actively live their Faith. Young Adult Ministry should be a vehicle in which they can develop their lives, faith and morals. Young adults should feel a sense of ownership for the group and be excited about participating in ministry activities, taking on the responsibility of keeping the group strong and active.

TRAINING FOR MINISTRY

There is no greater ministry opportunity than peer reaching peer. Young Adult Ministry provides a great opportunity for this. Young adult leaders should be trained in the tenets of Orthodox Christian leadership. They need to be made aware of the spiritual concern for leadership. When training young

adult leaders, it should be emphasized that they are there to serve both young adults as well as the entire parish. A leader should always be aware of his/her responsibility to the group, leading always by example. Consider having the leaders sign a commitment contract which outlines these responsibilities (See *Appendix B* for a sample commitment contract)

The parish priest, along with the parish youth director, should take the lead in the planning and implementation of this training. It is recommended that the young adults attend training for at least one or two days at least a month before the year begins. The training should include the following:

- ✦ Goals of Young Adult Ministry
- ✦ The Four Circles
- ✦ What it means to be a Christian Leader
- ✦ Define Roles and Responsibilities
- ✦ Ideas, Resources and Planning for Ministry
- ✦ Legal Issues of Ministry

Young adult leadership education should not end with this training. Throughout the year, there should be regular gatherings of the leaders for ongoing training, collaboration and support. These gatherings should last a couple of hours and occur at least four times during the year.

PRAYER FOR YOUNG ADULT LEADERS

As Orthodox Christians, the greatest pledge our young adult leaders can offer is a prayer for God to guide them in their ministry. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends that the young adult leaders recite the following prayer in place of the traditional Oath of Office:

O Lord and God, you have taught us that, “whoever of you desires to be first shall be a slave of all.” Lord, help us to lead the ministry by serving our fellow young adults, our spiritual father and our parish as a whole. Lord, enlighten our minds and strengthen our bodies, that we may direct this ministry according to your will. Guide us to bring about works of goodness to Your service and glory.

We thank you, Lord for the many blessings and mercies you continually bestow on us. In everything we do, in word or deed, may we always do so in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

TRAINING RESOURCES

Youth worker and leadership training is available from the Archdiocese Department and Metropolis Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. In depth training for youth workers, parents, and leaders on a parish, regional, and Metropolis level is available on the following topics:

- ✦ How to start an Early Childhood, HOPE, JOY, GOYA, and Young Adult Ministry
- ✦ Orthodox Youth Ministry
- ✦ Building Bridges
- ✦ Relational Ministry
- ✦ “Nuts and Bolts” of Youth Ministry
- ✦ Family Ministry
- ✦ Creative Teaching
- ✦ Christian Leadership

For additional information, contact the Archdiocesan Department or your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

Young Adult Ministry activities should be dynamic and engaging, so that everyone looks forward to attending. A primary goal of all gatherings is to create an atmosphere where familiarity can develop. Familiarity is most important in creating a setting for trust, sharing, and cultivation of the spiritual life of each member.

Begin and end all activities with prayer. This will lay the perfect foundation on which to build your ministry. Take 10-15 minutes at the end of any gathering to review business matters. From time to time, especially when there are new members, plan icebreakers for the group. Offering snacks and refreshments is a nice idea for all activities. Rotate the responsibility of bringing simple snacks for each gathering so that the burden doesn't fall on one or two people.

Young Adult Ministry represents the Orthodox Christian Faith. Therefore, the activities selected should reflect and promote Orthodox Christian values and morals. It is recommended that young adults gather together at least once a month, and if possible, plan an additional activity in addition to the regular meeting. When planning these activities, special attention should be paid to the Church calendar, making sure the activities do not conflict with the feasts and liturgical life of the church. Consult with the parish priest when selecting dates for all activities.

Young Adult Ministry activities can take on many different forms depending on the needs of the group. Some examples include:

- ✦ Bible Study
- ✦ Discussion Groups
- ✦ Book Club
- ✦ After Work Coffee or Dinner Gatherings
- ✦ Sunday Lunch

RETREATS

Retreats are a good way to heighten fellowship and to begin living and learning the Orthodox Faith. While serving as significant tools in enlightening lives, retreats set aside a special time for a change of pace, fellowship, reflection, growth, and bonding as a community of faith. Retreat themes need to be relevant and challenging to the group. A Young Adult Ministry should have or attend retreats at least two times per year. These can be coordinated on a parish, regional, or Metropolis level. If you are interested in holding a retreat at your parish, contact your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for assistance. For sample retreat schedules, see *Appendix D* and *E* in these guidelines. To find out about current young adult retreats planned, visit www.yal.org.

SERVICE AND WITNESS

Young adults can learn to be stewards and witnesses of their faith by giving their time, talents and treasures. It is critical that this be part of the ministry, and recommended that young adults participant in at least two service projects a year. Service projects can be short term, such as packing school kits for children in impoverished countries (see www.iocc.org for more information on this project), or more long term, like collecting and serving food at a local shelter monthly. There are so many opportunities to learn about giving and witnessing our faith. For additional examples, see *The Four Circles* section of these guidelines.

CONFERENCES

Conferences can be a fun way to gather young adults together for a few days in order to grow as

Orthodox Christians in worship, fellowship, service and witness. While retreats depart from this world to focus inward, conferences integrate the same aspect through the lens of our contemporary society—a more outward focus. Planning a conference takes more time than planning a retreat. The blessing of the Metropolis Hierarch and the guidance of the Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries are required. For more information on planning a conference, please see the *Young Adult Conference Guidelines*. Currently, there are several regular young adult conferences held throughout the Archdiocese. For more information visit www.yal.org.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Fellowship activities are a great way to build unity in a young adult group. Do not underestimate the power of spending time together during social gatherings; these are the activities that are going to build community within the group

At these social activities, you may get young adults that have not been to church in a long time. Through fellowship with other Orthodox Christians, they may become more involved in Young Adult Ministry and the spiritual life of the Church. Some fun activities would be: going to a movie, lunch, a ball game, hiking, bowling, day trip, etc.

ATHLETICS

Athletics also provide a great opportunity for fellowship. Athletics can enhance camaraderie by developing the idea of healthy competition. If there is a Young Adult Ministry sponsored team, those involved should be active participants of the Young Adult Ministry and active sacramental members of the Church. If your Young Adult Ministry is participating in a league with other Orthodox Churches, contact your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for local league guidelines.

INTER-ORTHODOX ACTIVITIES

Our Orthodox Faith reaches far beyond our culture. It is recommended to plan activities and events with young adults from various Orthodox Christian jurisdictions. Attending services at other Orthodox churches with the group can help emphasize the oneness of the faith. If the ministry does not have many participants, have your priest call another local Orthodox church in the region—join together!

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Starting a Young Adult Ministry where one has not existed before is a difficult but worthwhile task. Through the guidance of the parish priest, organize a small committee of interested young adults. This committee should consist of the priest, youth director, advisors, parents, young adults, a parish council member, and others who are interested in developing a young adult ministry. This group should be diverse in its makeup but united in its mission, gathering initially to plan the first activity, and meeting regularly thereafter to determine goals as well as consider the needs of the ministry.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important to take an inventory of your parish and the young adults in it. Consider the following as you begin to develop your Young Adult Ministry:

- ✦ What is currently happening with the ministry at our parish?
- ✦ How are young adults involved in the life of the church?

- ✦ What is the make-up of our young adult population?
- ✦ What is the history of Young Adult Ministry in our parish?
- ✦ Do we have a local college/university nearby? *If yes...*
 - ✦ Is there a campus ministry (OCF) organized?
 - ✦ How do these college students participate in the life of the parish?
- ✦ What do we want for our young adult program?
- ✦ How many young adults could we potentially serve?
 - ✦ What is the population we are looking at?
 - ✦ Who do we know that meets this criterion?
 - ✦ Which other members of the parish fit into the target population?
 - ✦ Who knows them?
 - ✦ How do we find the unknown?
- ✦ What resources and strengths do our parish and young adults possess that will help this ministry?
- ✦ What barriers do we face?
- ✦ What are these young adults already involved in that might conflict with this ministry's activities?
- ✦ Who are the important people to have involved in the ministry?
- ✦ Do we have any other Orthodox parishes nearby? *If yes...*
 - ✦ Have we done things with them in the past?
 - ✦ How can we collaborate with them?
- ✦ What do the young adults want from this ministry? (See *Appendix E: Sample Young Adult Survey*)

By understanding your needs and resources, you can properly determine the goals for your Young Adult Ministry. A good formula to follow is:

Needs + Resources = GOALS

GOALS AND PLAN

After completing the assessment of your parish community, develop some preliminary goals for the Young Adult Ministry. Be realistic and start small—you can build from there. Consider the following questions using information from your *Needs Assessment*.

- ✦ What purpose will this ministry serve?
- ✦ How will we meet this purpose? (meetings, activities, etc.)
- ✦ What resources are available to support the purpose of the ministry?
- ✦ When is the best time to hold activities?
- ✦ What do we want to do for our initial activity?
- ✦ What will be the different roles and responsibilities of people involved?
- ✦ How will we communicate activities?
- ✦ How will we plan activities?
- ✦ What obstacles might we encounter?

Often times in church ministry, we fail to take the necessary time to plan. Planning may take extra work initially but it saves time in the long run. The most successful church programs plan ahead not just by one week or one month, but a whole year in advance. Sit down with your Young Adult Ministry Team and take the time to outline and set goals each year.

PUBLICITY

Organize a list of potential young adults. To compile this list, look through the parish directory and consult with your parish priest. Send an introductory letter to all of these young adults letting them know about the formation of a Young Adult Ministry. Send an invitation to the first activity and follow up with a phone call or personal e-mail from the planning committee. Recruit others in the

community to assist in the personal contact so that the burden does not fall on one person. Make sure to also list the activity in your parish weekly and monthly bulletin.

As your group grows, arrange for different young adults to call others about meetings. It is not necessary to call everyone all the time—but it is important to call new participants or those who don't come as frequently. E-mail is a quick way to send out meeting notices and quick reminders. An excellent resource can be *Evite* invitations www.evite.com (*Evite* is a free service which sends event invitations and reminders). This service is invaluable, as it lets you know who has responded and who hasn't even opened the e-mail. Your group will grow over time through consistent communication.

INITIAL ACTIVITY

The initial activity should be an activity indicated by the *Needs Assessment* as something young adults like to do. The purpose of this activity is not only fellowship, but also to build interest—start off with a bang. The activity should be free, and having food is always a good idea. At the end of the activity, take 10 minutes to go over what the plans are for Young Adult Ministry and get input from the young adults present. People support what they create, so really listen to what the young adults tell you. Have a flyer for the next meeting ready to hand out at this time. Make sure to gather everyone's email address and contact information. It will likely take a few activities to get the desired attendance; be patient and don't become discouraged.

YEARLY MAINTENANCE

Participation in Young Adult Ministry will vary from year to year. Special efforts should be made to keep the ministry vibrant and healthy. When it is evident that a certain individual is not participating in the ministry, a special effort should be made to reach out to the young adult in order to bring them back to the group. Always consult with your parish priest first, as he may be aware of sensitive situations that may be preventing the young adult's participation.

Ways to do this are:

- ✦ Have the parish priest contact them.
- ✦ Have a peer contact them by e-mail, phone or in person.
- ✦ Send a "we miss you" letter.
- ✦ Make a home visitation.

It is important to make sure that the ministry is meeting the needs of the young adults who participate. The program should be evaluated at least once a year to see if it is accomplishing its goals. See *Appendix F: Sample End of the Year Program Evaluation*.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Annual Events - When something works well, make it an annual event. It gives the young adults something to anticipate.
- ✦ Consistency - Be consistent! This will build your ministry. Hold meetings at the same time each month.
- ✦ Record and Review - Make sure to document every young adult gathering's date, time and location. Review what went well and what did not at the end of each meeting and activity. Keep receipts for records. This will make future planning much easier.
- ✦ Cost - Be careful of the cost when planning young adult gatherings. No young adult should ever feel excluded because an activity is too expensive. If you have an outing that is a little more expensive than others, find a discrete way to make arrangements for the young adult who may be experiencing financial difficulty to participate. A group fundraiser is always good in this instance (see *Budgeting for Ministry*).

LEGAL ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION

Please take precautions when planning outings that require transportation, and whenever possible, hire a transportation service. This may seem like an unnecessary expense, but it is definitely worthwhile when considering safety and liability.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is advisable to have medical forms for Young Adult Ministry participants. Collecting forms at the beginning of the year is recommended, keeping them in a binder to take along on all outings. The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends using the American Camping Association health forms which can be ordered at www.acacamps.org (look for the Health History & Exam Form for Children/Youth/Adults Form FM08N in their online bookstore).

SAFETY

In all that we do, we must consider the physical safety of the young adults to whom we minister. Things that seem like fun (like throwing someone into a swimming pool) can result in serious injuries. With all activities, consider the risks involved and ways to minimize them. In addition, prepare for emergency situations, and always have a First Aid kit on hand. Host a First Aid/CPR training with all young adult leaders at the beginning of the year. When traveling, know the location of the nearest hospital and keep a list of emergency numbers handy at all times (make sure your parish priest's number is on this).

SEEKING HELP

Young Adult Ministry creates an intimate climate where young adults feel comfortable discussing issues of Faith and their lives. From time to time discussions may bring out a serious issue someone is dealing with. It is important to realize that Young Adult Ministry is not meant to be a support group or a substitute for therapeutic treatment. When serious issues arise, it is your obligation to help that person find professional help through the parish priest and local social agencies.

Deciding when a young adult needs more help than the ministry can give can be a difficult decision. When in doubt, check with your parish priest and/or local social agency for the best course of action, as there are several situations in which you should definitely seek professional help immediately.

INCIDENT REPORTS

For any incident that occurs at a Young Adult Ministry activity, a report should be filed. These incidents can include but are not limited to: minor and major injuries, seizures, anything that requires emergency services to be called (Fire, Ambulance or Police), harassment of a young adult by another, a young adult disclosing any of the above situations, chronic disciplinary offences, etc. These reports should be filed in the Church office and forwarded on to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for their files.

BUDGETING FOR THE MINISTRY

CREATING A BUDGET

Creating a budget is necessary for every ministry of the church. A budget will help set short and long term goals, defining appropriate resources for the ministry. Below please find items for consideration:

Income

- ✦ Allotted money from the parish funds
- ✦ Fundraising Activities
- ✦ Individual Donations
- ✦ Stewardship of the young adults

Expenses

- ✦ Charity
- ✦ Refreshments
- ✦ Postage and Printing
- ✦ Outings
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Supplies
- ✦ Misc.

FUNDRAISING

There are many simple fundraisers that young adults can do to help supplement the expenses of their ministry. Make sure to get all of the young adults involved in the planning and implementation of any fundraiser. When the fundraiser is complete, make sure to thank all of the necessary contributors to its success—especially the parish council. See the *Resources for Ministry* section for further information on fundraising.

STEWARDSHIP VS. DUES

It is critical that we all learn about stewardship, as the concept is different from dues. Rather than giving a set amount to the ministry, young adults are responsible for contributing to the group with their time, talents, and treasures as their means permit. This stewardship for the Young Adult Ministry is in addition to the young adult's stewardship to the church as a whole.

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

There are many resources to aid in the development of the Young Adult Ministry. Below is an abbreviated list of some resources that can assist you in your ministry. For a more complete list, see the *Resource Guide for Youth and Young Adult Ministry* available from the Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES

Guidelines are available for Young Adult Ministry, GOYA, JOY, HOPE, Early Childhood and Altar Boy Ministries. These guidelines include information on starting and sustaining a ministry, as well as other invaluable information. These resources will assist you in your parish programming.

YOUTH MINISTRY RESOURCE GUIDE

Do you need ideas for an activity, information on child abuse, or just a basic book on youth ministry? This resource guide lists helpful books, magazines, videos, websites, and organizations that will assist those who work with young people.

THE CHALLENGE

The *Challenge* is the monthly youth and young adult ministry supplement of the Orthodox Observer. This featured section offers articles for young people, parents, and youth workers, as well as upcoming events, youth worker tips and family sessions. Current issues and archives can

be found online at www.youth.goarch.org.

MINISTRY CURRICULUM

Each curriculum binder provides twelve complete session plans that follow the cycle of the Ecclesiastical Year. Youth Workers will enjoy monthly session plans in complete outline form, with objectives, discussion prompts, questions, activities, resources, and ideas.

TEEN VIDEO SERIES (*video and resource guide*)

These videos can be used with teenagers, families, parents and youth workers. The resource books contain vital statistics, additional information and resources, as well as youth group sessions and retreats to assist both clergy and youth workers. Currently available: *Substance Abuse: Our Kids Are Not Immune*, *Sexual Purity: Purity of Mind, Body, and Soul*, and *Teen Violence: Fight the Good Fight*.

WHERE DOES GOD GO FOR SUMMER VACATION?

This creative book helps breathe life into summer youth programs. It is a workbook written for young people of all ages. The author takes the concepts of faith and fellowship, creating some wonderful activities that are sure to entertain and engage young people while they learn about their Orthodox Faith. The resource book also includes a youth worker/parent's guide.

THE PLANNER: ORTHODOX DAILY CALENDAR AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Use *The Planner* to keep track of all your schedules. Keep a daily focus on Christ with Scriptural readings, fast days, prayers, saints of the day and inspiration from the Fathers. The Planner follows the Ecclesiastical (church) year beginning in September and ending in August. Spiral bound and PDA versions available.

EMAIL MINISTRY

Youth Worker Pulse provides resources, ideas, and activities for both parents and youth workers. Sent weekly via email, the information offers support for youth ministry following the monthly themes of *The Planner*. To sign up for *Youth Worker Pulse*, send an e-mail to listserv@listserv.goarch.org. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the e-mail type in "subscribe youth" (without the quotation marks). You will receive a confirmation of your subscription shortly thereafter.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- ✦ *The Basic Guide to Young Adult Ministry* by John Cusick and Katherine DeVries
- ✦ *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* by Colleen Carroll
- ✦ *Oriented Leadership* by Benjamin Williams and Michael McKibben

DISCUSSION RESOURCES AND ICEBREAKERS

- ✦ *God with Us: Critical Issues in Christian Life and Faith* by John Breck
- ✦ *Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* by Stanley Harakas
- ✦ *Silver Bullets* by Karl Rohnke

PRAYER

- ✦ Online Chapel of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Daily Prayers for Orthodox Christians* edited by N. Michael Vapouris (www.hchc.edu/bookstore)
- ✦ *My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book* edited by Anthony Coniaris (www.light-n-life.com)

FUNDRAISING

- ✦ *Youth Ministry Handbook* Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

(www.ukrainianorthodoxchurchusa.org/offices/OYM/)

- ✦ *20 Something Ideas for Fundraising* by Orthodox Church in America Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (<http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/20SomethingWays/Fundraising.htm>)
- ✦ OCF Fundraising Ideas (<http://www.ocf.net/resources/fundraising.asp>)

MAGAZINES AND PROGRAMS

- ✦ *The Basil Leaf* published by Orthodox Christian Fellowship (www.ocf.net)
- ✦ *Campus Life* published by Christianity Today (www.christianitytoday.com)
- ✦ *Come Receive the Light* Orthodox Christian Radio Network (www.receive.org)

WEBSITES

- ✦ Young Adult Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.yal.org)
- ✦ Orthodox Christian Fellowship—Campus Ministry (www.ocf.net)
- ✦ Syndesmos World Fellowship of Youth (www.syndesmos.org)

ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY TEAM

As youth workers, it is important for us to realize that the greatest resource we have is one another. While books, videos, and magazines are helpful to your ministry, creating a network of Orthodox Youth Workers in your parish, region and Metropolis is critical. Reach out to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries or the Archdiocesan Department for ideas and further resources. Additionally, they can put you in touch with other youth workers who are involved in the same ministry.

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
83 Saint Basil Road
Garrison, NY 10524
Tel: (646) 519-6180 ☎Fax: (646) 519-6191
youthoffice@goarch.org ? www.youth.goarch.org

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF IONIAN VILLAGE AND CAMPING MINISTRIES
83 Saint Basil Road
Garrison, NY 10524
Tel: (646) 519-6190 ☎Fax: (646) 519-6192
ionianvillage@goarch.org ? www.ionianvillage.goarch.org
camp@goarch.org ? www.camp.goarch.org

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
83 Saint Basil Road
Garrison, NY 10524
Tel: (646) 519-6183 ☎Fax: (646) 519-6192
nyyouth@goarch.org ? www.ny.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
2480 Clairmont Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

Tel: (404) 634-9345 ☎Fax: (404) 634-2471
youth@atlmopolis.org ?www.atlanta.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF BOSTON
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
162 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445
Tel: (617) 277-4742 ☎Fax: (617) 739-9229
youthministry@boston.goarch.org ?www.boston.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
40 East Burton Place
Chicago, IL 60610
Tel: (312) 337-4130 ☎Fax: (630) 654-3514
gochicagoyouth@aol.com ?www.chicago.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF DENVER
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
4550 East Alameda Avenue
Denver, CO 80246-1301
Tel: (303) 333-7794 ☎Fax: (303) 333-7796
denveryouth@goarch.org ?www.denver.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF DETROIT
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
2560 Crooks Road
Troy, MI 48084
Tel: (248) 823-2411 ☎Fax: (248) 823-2401
youth@detroit.goarch.org ?www.detroit.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
215 East Grove Street
Westfield, NJ 07090
Tel: (908) 301-0500 ☎Fax: (908) 3011397
youth@nj.goarch.org ?www.nj.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
5201 Ellsworth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232
Tel: (412) 621-8543 ☎Fax: (412) 621-1522
youth@odpgh.org ?www.pittsburgh.goarch.org

METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
245 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: (415) 753-3075 ☎Fax: (415) 753-1165
sfyouth@sanfran.goarch.org ?www.sanfran.goarch.org

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE YOUNG ADULT LEADER APPLICATION

Name

Patron Saint

Name day

Address

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Email

IM name

Birth date

Vocation/Major

Emergency Contact

Home Phone

Cell Phone

What leadership role are you interested in and why?

What strengths do you have to offer Young Adult Ministry?

What challenges do you have and what do you hope to learn while serving in this position?

How does your Orthodox Faith impact your life?

Young Adult Leader Applicant Signature Date

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE YOUNG ADULT LEADER COMMITMENT CONTRACT

The mission of *Young Adult Ministry* is to cultivate and educate our young adults, leading them to the fullness of the Faith and likeness of God; by utilizing the four circles of Christian living, *worship, fellowship, service, and witness*, young adults are integrated into the life of the Church, enabling them to become active members of the body of Christ.

As a member of the Young Adult Leadership Team, I commit myself to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to live the Faith and to grow continually on my journey toward salvation. My responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ✦ Uphold the teachings and traditions of our Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.
- ✦ Use my time, talents and treasures as a steward of the Faith.
- ✦ Be an active Sacramental member of the Church.
- ✦ Develop a personal prayer life.
- ✦ Actively live my Orthodox Faith.
- ✦ Strive to live a balanced life with Christian worship, fellowship, service and witness.
- ✦ Support and work with the parish council, Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and National Young Adult Committee.
- ✦ Communicate regularly with our parish priest and Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

I understand that this is a one-year commitment. If at anytime I feel that I am unable to fulfill my responsibilities, I will resign my position. Furthermore, if I am not fulfilling my responsibilities, I understand that I may be asked to step down as a leader.

Young Adult Leader Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE DAY RETREAT SCHEDULE

9:00 am	Arrival and Light Refreshments
9:30 am	Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)
10:00 am	Icebreakers
10:30 am	Session 1
11:30 am	Private Reflection Time: Alone with God
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Session 2
2:30 pm	Break
3:00 pm	Wrap-Up and Reflection
4:00 pm	Vespers (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE WEEKEND RETREAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

6:00 pm	Arrive and Dinner
8:00 pm	Icebreakers
9:00 pm	Session 1
10:00 pm	Compline (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)
10:30 pm	Devotional

SATURDAY

7:00 am	Wake-Up	
8:00 am	Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)	8:30 am
Breakfast		
9:15 am	Session 2	
10:45 am	Group Outdoor Activity	
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Session 3	
2:30 pm	Free Time	
5:00 pm	Evening Prayers (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)	
5:30 pm	Dinner	
6:30 pm	Session 4	
7:30 pm	Campfire	
9:00 pm	Late Night Discussion	
10:30 pm	Cabin Devotional	

SUNDAY

7:00am	Wake-Up	
8:00 am	Divine Liturgy (<i>involve the young adults in the service</i>)	9:30am
Breakfast		
10:15 am	Wrap-Up	
11:00 am	Dismissal	

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE YOUNG ADULT SURVEY

Name:

Address:

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

Age Range: 18-25 25-30 30-35

Current participation in church activities:

Current activities outside of church:

Which format(s) would you be interested in participating in?

- Discussion Groups Book Clubs
- Bible Study Social Activities
- Service Projects Other

What topics would you like to discuss?

What activities (service/social) would you like to participate in?

Have you been involved in a Young Adult Ministry before? If yes, please explain where, and your level of involvement.

How often would you like to meet?

- 1 time a month 2 times a month
- Weekly Other

Days that work for you?

Times that work?

- Early morning Lunch time
- After work Weekends only

Which is the most effective way to let you know what is going on: e-mail, phone call, flyer, etc.?

How would you like to be involved in the young adult ministry: participant, helping, leading?

What talents do you have to further the ministry?

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE END OF THE YEAR PROGRAM EVALUATION

How often did we have activities this year?

How many people did we have on average?

What teenagers were involved? Who wasn't involved and how can we bring them into the ministry next year?

Did we have activities that incorporate the Four Circles—*worship, witness, service* and *fellowship*?

What activities did people enjoy?

- ✦ Why were they successful?
- ✦ How can we expand on these for next year?

What activities didn't go to well?

- ✦ What went wrong?
- ✦ How can we change that for next year?

What would we like to see in the future? Brainstorm ideas for:

- ✦ Worship
- ✦ Witness
- ✦ Service
- ✦ Fellowship

What resources and strengths supported the ministry?

- ✦ How can we expand on these?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we not tap into this year? How can we use these next year?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we over use this year? How can we avoid this next year?

What problems did we face?

- ✦ How can we solve these and avoid them in the future?

How is our current structure (communication, planning) supporting the ministry?

- ✦ What changes do we need to make?
- ✦ What changes in leadership will we be making?
- ✦ How will we transition for these changes?

APPENDIX E: ARE YOU HEADED FOR BURNOUT?

Group Magazine (www.groupmag.com)

July-August, 1996

By Mike Gillespie

I've logged 18 years as a youth minister-18 years learning to outsmart a ministry Nemesis that's claimed many of my friends. That enemy is burnout. Two decades ago, I scoffed at the possibility; now I don't. That's because I've paid a high price for ignoring the warning signs of burnout in my ministry. As you read my story, take a moment to evaluate your ministry. Remember, if you think you're safe from burnout, you're probably its next victim.

WARNING SIGN #1: THE SUPERSTAR SYNDROME

Early in ministry, I was sure hard work was all I needed for success. I felt confident because I already had a good work ethic. Because of my naiveté I didn't realize the church will let you work as many hours as you want. There's always something more to do. A 45-hour week quickly stretched to 50, then to 60, then...I thought I could be everything to everybody. I was particularly vulnerable at youth council planning sessions. We scheduled retreats, lock-ins, and trips with little recognition on my part of what it'd take to pull them off. The kids loved that about me, so I succumbed. My favorite refrain: "Sure, we can do that." One summer, I committed to participate in five group trips and lead two weeklong children's camps. "Sure, I can get it all done." BUNK! I'm learning to work smarter, not longer.

Ask Yourself: Am I obsessed with getting it all done? Is hard work a sign of successful ministry to me?

WARNING SIGN #2: THE FATIGUE FACTOR

How many times in the last six months has a church member said, "You look tired." Hey, there's no hiding it. All those all-nighters, retreats, program planning meetings, and visitation trips add up. It surfaces in your posture, your eyes, your energy, and in your enthusiasm. It roars out at people you work with in the form of irritability, sarcasm, and cynicism.

I've learned to appreciate people who tell me when I look tired. I take it as grace. I get some rest, lighten my calendar, and recommit to my exercise routine. I understand that I'm no good to anyone when I'm tired. Excuses such as "That's what ministry is all about" are simply dumb. Recently, a youth group member bluntly told me, "Hey, you look tired. Get some rest." I did. It helped. I'm psyched again.

Ask Yourself: Do people notice that I'm tired a lot? Have I looked in the mirror lately and moaned, "I'm tired"?

WARNING SIGN #3: MISHANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

All of us work with difficult people. Every church and every denomination has them. Sometimes I think God has "over blessed" me with them. Difficult people demand a lot of attention. They're high maintenance people. It takes patience and energy to respond well when they come at you with another passionate agenda. How you deal with them can indicate impending burnout. I recall an intense father who had demanding views and a biting, sarcastic attitude. I worked with his two daughters. I monitored how I reacted to him. Sometimes I was highly effective and could work through his criticisms positively. Other times I was poisoned by his attacks, and lingering bitterness got the best of me. What did I discover? It all had to do with ministry energy. When I was in

“martyr” mode, I was much less effective with him. When I was energized, I never took his stuff personally.

Ask Yourself: Do difficult people often get the best of me? Do confrontations linger and absorb me emotionally?

WARNING SIGN #4: SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

When we balance our emotional, spiritual, and physical needs, we set in place a foundation for more effective ministry. Experience has taught me that spiritual needs are easy to neglect. That’s why I started taking a yearly hiking vacation in the Colorado Rockies. God has worked on me powerfully on those back-country trails. As ministers, we’re always praying for kids, preparing Bible studies, preaching, and so on. And we expect we’ll find nourishment by spiritual osmosis. That just isn’t true.

To meet my spiritual needs, I must pursue prayer, reading, and quiet time apart from my ministry. If I don’t, my kids know. How? I lead Bible studies like a dictator instead of a facilitator. I preach at people instead of with them. Group prayer times are legalistic and boring. And I’m pharisaical—I mean I go through the religious motions while neglecting the Holy Spirit’s power.

Ask Yourself: Do I tend to overlook my own spiritual nurture? Am I feeding myself so little spiritual food that I’m unable to nurture others through my ministry?

WARNING SIGN #5: AVOIDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

If we don’t pursue opportunities for professional growth, we grow stale. And when burnout is lurking, we lose interest in upgrading our skills. Professional growth is important to me for two reasons: (1) I value professional relationships with ministry colleagues. When I plan activities or brainstorm ideas with friends, or when I join support groups, I stay fresh. (2) I appreciate good training opportunities. I use my continuing education allowance to upgrade my skills. I particularly like events that teach me new strategies, not just clarify what I already know. I’ve not always put an emphasis on professional growth. I realize those were times when the burnout bug was like a tick trying to burrow in. Don’t neglect opportunities for professional growth. If you do, that’s a burnout warning sign. (Or worse, you think you know it all already!)

Ask Yourself: Do I see professional growth as just another impossible expectation that must be sacrificed for “the important stuff”?

WARNING SIGN #6: NEGLECTING PERSONAL NEEDS

Have you learned that ministry needs always take priority over personal needs? Then you’re in for troubled times. It’s taken me too long to understand that God never asks me to sacrifice my personal life for professional ministry. I know you could use “take up your cross and follow me” as debate ammunition. But I also know that, at times, I’ve neglected myself, my family, and my friends. And I believe that’s a sin. What a joke—we punish the people we love most to do God’s work. That’s stupid theology. If you make ministry your mistress, you’ll fizzle quickly. I’m grateful I learned before it was too late that God’s hopes for my ministry aren’t the same as my own expectations. But I’ve paid dearly for neglecting myself, my family, and my friends.

Ask Yourself: Do I neglect my personal needs because of ministry demands? Do I neglect my family or friends because the church needs me more?

If you checked YES on all or most of these warning signs, you’re headed for burnout. Please, before it’s too late, take the necessary steps to prevent it. Many good people have left ministry because of burnout. You could be one of them.

**A NOTE FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES**

If this article rings true to you, take some time for yourself before proceeding with your ministry. You cannot minister to others unless you minister to yourself first. Remember that the heart must first pump blood to itself before it can pump it to the rest of the body. If you need assistance or guidance, talk with your parish priest, a fellow youth worker or someone from the Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team.

FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

As we develop and update our resources and website regularly, we welcome your feedback. If you have questions, ideas, suggestions, or need resources not yet provided, please e-mail the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at youthoffice@goarch.org. Let us know how we can better support you and your efforts in Youth Ministry.

It is our fervent prayer that the provided resources, especially these guidelines, offer Youth and Young Adults the opportunity for growth in the faith, development of personal relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and continued strength to strive toward Salvation.