



Accompaniment Project Team

Vision / Process / and Role Descriptions

Vision for Accompaniment

“...the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today.”

Preparation Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, Page 1.

By inviting young people into meaningful conversations, parishes can truly accompany youth in faith and discernment. Within accompanying communities, youth will have multiple opportunities to meet with adult faith companions. Because the parish is welcoming of its young members, youth will be fully integrated throughout parish life. Those who have been left out of current efforts will now be engaged. Programs that serve youth will be transformed to utilize this accompaniment mindset. New strategies and initiatives will be developed. Parents and faith companions will be supported in guiding youth toward vibrant faith. The accompaniment model for ministry with youth will be evident through:

- Building relationships of accompaniment with youth throughout the parish
- Transforming current youth programs and processes
- Developing new initiatives that engage youth who may have been left out of previous strategies.
- Engaging parents and families
- Empowering faith companions for each youth



Leadership Conversations

To grow accompaniment efforts, parishes will recruit and support a project team to engage parish leaders and members in key conversations and planning in helping develop a shared vision, effective practices and facilitating structure to support efforts in three areas.

a. Becoming an Accompanying Parish

Youth will be included throughout parish life and parish members will be supported in witnessing their faith and engaging young disciples in faith conversations. These efforts will build relationships between the parish community and their young members.

b. Empowering Parents and Faith Companions

Within the parish community, there are many connections between youth and adults. Among these potential faith companion relationships are parents and family members such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and siblings. There are also sacramental relationships such as godparents and Confirmation sponsors. Ministry leaders, catechists, teachers, and coaches can accompany youth, as well as other caring members of the parish community. Ideally, every young person would have five faith companion relationships. The faith community will support each of these companions through training, resources, mentoring, network.

c. Building Youth Ministry around Accompaniment

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis provides a vision for ministry with youth that builds the ministry around encounters, witness, and accompanying relationships. Parishes can transform and create ministry with youth to support accompaniment and utilize faith companions as key elements of the program. These efforts will guide ministry teams to evaluate various ministries using this vision. This will direct communities to transform ministries, create new opportunities, and eliminate efforts that do not build toward the outcomes of accompanied discipleship.

The Parish Accompaniment Team will involve parish leaders and members in courageous conversations and strategic planning:

- Conversation #1: Introduction to Accompaniment
- Conversation #2: Being a Faith Companion
- Conversation #3: Developing Faith Companions for Youth
- Conversation #4: Transforming Ministries to Promote Accompaniment
- Conversation #5: Becoming a Parish Who Accompanies
- Conversation #6: Leadership for Accompaniment



Parish Accompaniment Project Team

A Parish Accompaniment Project Team will guide the assessment, planning, and implementation of the Accompaniment project in their community.

The Accompaniment Project Team should have a Project Liaison who is a parish staff member. The Project Team should also have a Chairperson, who will be responsible for facilitating meetings and guiding the process. The Liaison and the Chairperson will work together to recruit and develop a Project Team and lead the Project Team through the steps of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Parish Accompaniment Project. The two roles of Project Liaison and Project Team Chairperson could also be combined as one person.

The Parish Accompaniment Project Team will

- Work for an eighteen-month period.
- Assess the current state of the parish by considering the parish as a whole, the specific ministry efforts for youth, and the support for parents and family members.
- Plan for strategies to engage the parish community with young members.
- Plan for strategies to grow and transform current ministry efforts with youth to promote witnessing and faith companionship.
- Plan for strategies to support parents and family members as faith companions.
- Recruit and support adults to be faith companions with youth.
- Recruit and support youth to be faith companions for their peers.
- Plan for the hosting of training and formation for faith companions and parents.
- Recruit leaders and work to implement strategies.
- Support accompaniment strategies.
- Evaluate accompaniment efforts.

The Project Team would include parish staff members, parish leaders, leaders involved in youth ministry efforts, and parents. The team should include leaders that represent the cultural diversity of the parish community. Ideally, the Project Team will have seven to twelve members. Consider recruiting leaders from these categories of membership:

- Parish staff
- Ministry leaders who work with youth
- Catechetical leaders who provide catechesis and sacramental preparation for youth
- Ministry leaders who work with parents and families
- Ministry leaders who guide elements of parish life where youth are engaged such as liturgy, community life, service, and formation
- Parish members from youth-serving professions
- Parents of youth
- Young adults

The Project Team is essential in helping the parish implement accompaniment efforts with youth. This team is different from your Youth Ministry team, though the Project Team would benefit from including

some members. In developing this project, it is helpful to gather input, energy, and support around the new initiatives that will enhance your accompaniment efforts. Involving new voices and leaders will provide influence and creativity to implementing new efforts. There are people who will say “yes” to being part of the Project Team because it is a specific and time-limited commitment.

This Project Team shares leadership with the Chairperson and the Liaison in the planning tasks of the project. A team approach is essential because it broadens both the base of input into the process and that of support for the new efforts. The team approach emphasizes collaboration and shared decision-making that helps to build a strong sense of *ownership* among team members. This ownership extends the responsibility for the project into the community. You may find that some of the Project Team members become involved in youth ministry leadership because of their engagement with this project.

The best way to recruit a planning team is through personal, one-to-one contacts with individuals you have identified because of their interest in youth, involvement in parish life, skills, and abilities.

The following job descriptions provide a focus for your recruitment. Be sure to personalize each job description to the planning approach and timeline your parish is using.

Job Description

Parish Accompaniment Project Staff Liaison

Job Summary

The Accompaniment Project Staff Liaison is primarily responsible for working closely with the Project Team Chairperson and the Project Team to develop the Team and coordinate the assessment, implementation, and evaluation of the accompaniment efforts of the parish. This will include planning for the training events for faith companions and parents, and the parish-wide event.

Tasks

1. Provides responsive communication about parish efforts to the pastor and parish leadership.
2. Supervises and supports the Project Team Chairperson.
3. Works with the Project Team Chairperson to plan for the Project Team meetings.
4. Supports the Project Team Chairperson in leading the parish assessment process.
5. Supports the process for planning for strategies for accompaniment.
6. Supports the efforts to recruit leaders to implement strategies.
7. Assures that the program is consistent with parish goals and directions.
8. Supports the Project Team in evaluating accompaniment efforts.

Abilities Needed

1. Desire to organize an effective way for the parish and families to accompany youth in faith.
2. Willingness and ability to inquire and listen to youth, families of youth, and parish members.
3. Organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.
4. Ability to work in collaboration with others.
5. Imagination, creativity, and prayerfulness.

Length of Commitment

Approximately fourteen to eighteen months of active involvement with an evaluation meeting to attend at the end.

Accountable To

Pastor and parish leadership

Job Description

Accompaniment Project Team Chairperson

Job Summary

The Accompaniment Project Team Chairperson is primarily responsible for the development and facilitation of the Project Team and the coordination of the assessment, implementation, and evaluation of the accompaniment efforts of the parish. This will include planning for the training events for faith companions and parents, and the parish-wide event.

Tasks

1. Organizes the Project Team meetings.
2. Supervises the parish assessment process.
3. Coordinates the process for planning for strategies for accompaniment.
4. Directs the efforts to recruit leaders to implement strategies.
5. Works closely with the parish staff liaison to assure the program is consistent with parish goals and directions.
6. Leads the Project Team in evaluating accompaniment efforts.

Abilities Needed

1. Desire to organize an effective way for the parish and families to accompany youth in faith.
2. Willingness and ability to inquire and listen to youth, families of youth, and parish members.
3. Organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.
4. Ability to work in collaboration with others.
5. Imagination, creativity and prayerfulness.

Length of Commitment

Approximately fourteen to eighteen months of active involvement with an evaluation meeting to attend at the end.

Accountable To

Accompaniment Project Staff Liaison

Job Description

Accompaniment Project Team Member

Job Summary

Members of the Accompaniment Project Team collaborate with each other in working through the assessment, implementation, and evaluation of parish accompaniment efforts for youth.

Team Member Tasks

1. Attends all trainings and meetings for the project.
2. Works with others to follow through on all steps of the planning process which include: an assessment of the current efforts; planning for renewed efforts for accompaniment; hosting training for faith companions and parents; hosting a parish-wide event; and implementing new strategies.
3. Participates in the evaluation of accompaniment efforts at the end of the process.

Abilities Needed

1. Desire to organize an effective way for the parish and families to accompany youth in faith.
2. Willingness and ability to inquire and listen to youth, families of youth, and parish members.
3. Organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.
4. Ability to work in collaboration with others.
5. Imagination, creativity, and prayerfulness.

Length of Commitment

Approximately fourteen to eighteen months of active involvement with an evaluation meeting to attend at the end.

Accountable To

Project Team Chairperson