



Acompañamiento: Transforming Parish Ministry with Youth

*Implementing a Model for Parishes to Minister
to Youth through Accompaniment*



In Parishes Who Accompany Youth and their Families in Faith

Parishes who accompany youth in faith witness to youth through the life of the parish and family. Belonging to the community and participating in ministries creates the opportunities for a variety of faith sharing, prayer-centered relationships. This list identifies the hopes for youth, pastors, parish leaders, ministry programs, parents, faith companions, and the members of the parish.

Youth

"...just as our Lord Jesus Christ walked alongside the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35), the Church is also urged to accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love."

Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, #1

"Young Catholics are not merely on the receiving end of pastoral activity: they are living members of the one ecclesial body, baptized persons in whom the Spirit of the Lord is alive and active. They help to enrich what the Church is and not only what she does. They are her present and not only her future."

Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, #54

- Have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ sustained through their Catholic faith
- Have faith companions, adults and other youth, to guide their journey of discipleship
- Can identify five caring adults in their life
- Are known in the community
- Have access to ministry and leadership roles
- Participate in community decision making
- Are appreciated for their contributions
- Have conversations with members of the parish community beyond their family and peers

Pastors and Parish Leaders

“Accompanying young people requires going beyond a preconceived framework, encountering young people where they are, adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously.”

Preparatory Document, page 12

- Understand the process of accompanying youth in faith
- Promote a culture of welcome and inclusion
- Provide ministry for youth and their families that promote faith sharing relationships
- Provides for an intentional way of engaging young people online (e.g. website, social media) that young people find meaningful, helpful, and responsive.
- Know youth and their families in the community
- Understand the dynamics of being an adolescent today
- Consider and involve youth when planning for parish life
- Help to provide access for youth to ministry and leadership roles
- Pray for young people and their families
- The parish has an intentional way of engaging young people online (e.g. website, social media) that young people find meaningful, helpful, and responsive.
- Young people can identify five caring adults in their life and vice versa.

Ministry Programs that Include Youth

“The accompaniment of younger generations is not an optional element in the task of educating and evangelizing young people, but an ecclesial duty and a right of every young person.”

Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, #81.

“Pastoral activity with young people, which is called upon to start processes more than to dominate spaces, shows, above all, the importance of service to the human growth of each individual and the educational and formative resources that can support it. ...the Church needs to get accustomed to the fact that the ways of approaching the faith are less standardized, and therefore she must become more attentive to the individuality of each person.”

Preparatory Document, #4.

- Provide encounters with Christ
- Promote faith sharing relationships with peers and adult faith companions
- Provide for flexible participation
- Provide accompaniment for youth
- Provide pastoral care and outreach for youth and their families
- Include families of youth, especially parents

Parents and Faith Companions

“The role of credible adults and their cooperation is basic in the course of human development and vocational discernment. This requires authoritative believers, with a clear human identity, a strong sense of belonging to the Church, a visible spiritual character, a strong passion for education and a great capacity for discernment.”

Preparatory Document, page 14

“Those who accompany should be welcoming and patient, they elicit pertinent questions and recognize the signs of the Spirit in the replies of the young. In personal spiritual accompaniment one learns to recognize, interpret and choose from the perspective of faith, listening to the Spirit’s promptings within the life of every day. “

Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, #97.

- Understand the process of accompanying youth in faith
- Have skills for listening
- Show empathy for youth and their families
- Provide pastoral care for youth and their families, which includes referring youth for services as needed
- Witness to their faith
- Share faith with youth and engage in faith conversations
- Pray for young people and their families

Members of the Parish Community

“...we need a Church capable of walking at people’s side, of doing more than simply listening to them; a Church which accompanies them on their journey; ...”

Pope Francis, World Youth Day, 2013.

“It is therefore the community as a whole that is the prime subject of accompaniment, precisely because in its heart it develops that drama of relationships that can support the person on his journey and furnish him with points of reference and orientation.”

Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, #92

- Have a shared vision for accompanying youth in faith
- Have an appreciation for young people’s experience of God
- Know youth in the community
- Acknowledge and appreciate youth’s perspective and contributions
- Have conversations with youth in the parish beyond family members
- Pray for young people and their families