

# Let's Talk about Youth and Faith: Training for Parents and Faith Companions



By Tom East, Director, Center for Ministry Development

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Calling all those who lead and accompany youth, whether within the parish or in the wider community! You can use this training for parents, Confirmation sponsors, catechists, youth ministry team members, and others who are faith companions for young people. This process is designed to be used by groups or individuals. Viewing the YouTube video *Parent and Faith Companion Training Presentation by Tom East* ([https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g\\_g](https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g_g)) and participating in the sharing or reflection will take between 90 and 120 minutes.

## Video and Group Sharing Process for Groups

- Welcome participants and distribute the handouts.
- Introduce the YouTube video *Parent and Faith Companion Training Presentation by Tom East* ([https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g\\_g](https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g_g)) and the topic:

Parents and all adults who care about and work with youth have an opportunity to talk with and walk with young people to connect faith and life. Youth today are making big decisions about their lives. They are deciding who to be with, where they are going, and how they will prepare for their future. They are also making decisions about faith. Young people in our parishes need someone to accompany them; they need faith companions. This is a big job! You deserve support and tools to help you make the faith connection. As Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we can accompany youth, listen to their questions, witness to faith, lead them to encounter Jesus, and empower them for mission.

We are going to watch a video presentation of these materials and pause for our own reflections.

These resources are provided as part of the Accompaniment Project of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and the Center for Ministry Development.

- Continue with prayer:  
*(Begin with a Sign of the Cross)*

Loving God,  
We are gathered in your name as a community who care about young people.  
We pray for all youth, that they may know you and rely on your love.

We pray that faith may guide their life and that they might know how much we care for them.  
Open our hearts to know you better and to share your love with youth.  
We ask this in Jesus name.

All: Amen

- Watch video until 5:36.
- Ask participants:

What do you hope for youth and their faith?

- Watch until 25:42 introduction of video.

Note: Instead of watching as part of the video, you can watch the video *Brené Brown on Empathy* here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>).

- Ask participants:

What did you hear in the video? What does this tell us about companionship with young people?

- Advance to 29:07 and watch until 46:07.

- Ask participants:

Find a partner to share with and discuss these questions:

Recall a faith conversation you've had with a young person.

- What was hard?
- What was easy?
- What worked?
- What doesn't work?

- Allow several minutes for sharing, then regather as a group and ask for some sample responses.
- Watch again until 1:01:07.
- Ask participants to regather with the person with whom they shared previously for a role-play.

One person is the *Parent / Adult Faith Companion* and the other person is the *Youth*.

Show the "youth" these situations and ask them to choose one and begin sharing with their faith companion.

- "Sometimes I feel silly praying to God. I don't know that God is really there."
- "Mom and dad are fighting all the time now. I think it might be my fault. I don't know what to do."

- "I really don't like going to youth ministry, or religious education. I feel like I've already heard this stuff. I don't have anything in common with the other youth there."
- "God couldn't care about me now. Not after the things I've done."
- Allow eight to ten minutes for sharing.
- Regather as a group.
- Ask the people who were the youth:
  - What did your faith companion do that was helpful to you?
  - What if anything, did they do that was as helpful?
- Ask the faith companions:
  - What worked in that conversation?
  - What was comfortable? What was uncomfortable?
- Watch until 1:13:25.
- Distribute the handout for the slides. Present these options and ask participants to share about ways that they could experience additional support.
  - Get together with other parents and faith companions for networking and support.
  - Have someone to talk to about companionship youth in faith.
  - Resources for knowing how to answer tough faith questions and for understanding the adolescent faith journey AND / OR
  - Training for knowing how to answer tough faith questions and for understanding the adolescent faith journey
  - Resources to help youth with pastoral care issues like anxiety, stress, and depression. AND / OR
  - Training to help youth with pastoral care issues like anxiety, stress, and depression.
  - Other?
- Ask participants:
  - Take a moment to think about a young person with whom you are a faith companion, (Or with whom you could be a faith companion.)
    - What does she or he need at this moment?
    - What is your next step as a faith companion?
    - What is something you would pray for this young person?
- Ask participants to share the name of a youth for whom they are a companion as part of our shared prayer.
- Watch again until the conclusion at 1:16:13.

## Video and Group Sharing Process for Individuals

- Provide individuals with the link for the video, the handouts, and the handout for the slides.
- Introduce the YouTube video *Parent and Faith Companion Training Presentation by Tom East* ([https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g\\_g](https://youtu.be/htojwVw5g_g)) and the topic:

Parents and all adults who care about and work with youth have an opportunity to talk with and walk with young people to connect faith and life. Youth today are making big decisions about their lives. They are deciding who to be with, where they are going, and how they will prepare for their future. They are also making decisions about faith. Young people in our parishes need someone to accompany them; they need faith companions. This is a big job! You deserve support and tools to help you make the faith connection. As Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we can accompany youth, listen to their questions, witness to faith, lead them to encounter Jesus, and empower them for mission.

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- Continue with prayer:

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Open our hearts to know you better and to share your love with youth.

We ask this in Jesus name.

All: Amen

- Watch video until 5:36.
- Reflect:

What do you hope for youth and their faith?

- Watch until 25:42 introduction of video.

Note: Instead of watching as part of the video, you can watch the video *Brené Brown on Empathy* here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>).

- Reflect:

What did you hear in the video? What does this tell us about companionship with young people?

- Advance to 29:07 and watch until 46:07.
- Reflect:

Recall a faith conversation you have had with a young person.

- What was hard?
- What was easy?
- What worked?
- What doesn't work?

- Watch again until 1:01:07.
- Reflect:

Think of a young person who may fit each sentence.

How would you engage in conversation?

- "Sometimes I feel silly praying to God. I don't know that God is really there."
- "Mom and dad are fighting all the time now. I think it might be my fault. I don't know what to do."
- "I really don't like going to youth ministry, or religious education. I feel like I have already heard this stuff. I don't have anything in common with the other youth there."
- "God couldn't care about me now. Not after the things I've done."

- Reflect:

As you imagine these conversations, what is comfortable? What is uncomfortable?

- Watch until 1:13:25.
- Reflect:

Take a moment to think about a young person with whom you are a faith companion, (Or with whom you could be a faith companion.)

- ▶ What does she or he need at this moment?
- ▶ What is your next step as a faith companion?
- ▶ What is something you would pray for this young person?

- Watch again until the conclusion at 1:16:13.
- What would you appreciate for further support? Consider the options below and provide your leader with feedback about ways that you would like to be supported as a faith companion or parent.

- Get together with other parents and faith companions for networking and support.
- Have someone to talk to about companioning youth in faith.
- Resources for knowing how to answer tough faith questions and for understanding the adolescent faith journey AND / OR
- Training for knowing how to answer tough faith questions and for understanding the adolescent faith journey
- Resources to help youth with pastoral care issues like anxiety, stress, and depression. AND / OR
- Training to help youth with pastoral care issues like anxiety, stress, and depression.
- Other?